

CURRICULAR CHOICES FOR ELITE BILINGUAL SCHOOLS ON COLOMBIA'S CARIBBEAN
COAST: AMERICAN ACCREDITATION OR THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

BY

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

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Professor Brent Metz, Chair

Discusses the movement towards international recognition among "elite" bilingual schools on Colombia's Caribbean coast, with a special focus on U.S. accrediting agencies and the International Baccalaureate.



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¹ 2cairo.com “Map of Colombia”

www.2cairo.com/countries/information/images/maps/americas/colombia_rel_2001.jpg Accessed: 01 May 2010.

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Last year the Santa Marta Bilingual School (SMBS) finally reached a goal it had sought for a long time, its enrollment cap of 600 students.² This meant a lot of things for the school, most importantly that demand had finally surpassed supply and it could think about an increase in tuition. More capital would allow the school to start looking at expensive international certifications or affiliations that would increase the school's status, hopefully better prepare its students for university studies, and further separate them from the competition, of which there was more and more each year. Schools all over Colombia are coming to this crossroad where they have the money to finally look at some sort of international accreditation or affiliation.

This thesis looks at the options available to bilingual schools at this crossroad, and examines and compares what are far and away the two most popular options, American³ accreditation and the International Baccalaureate. This thesis had originally planned to also examine a third option, seeking no international recognition, but the last major school in the region to take that approach recently abandoned it, seeking American accreditation and demonstrating that for "elite" bilingual schools, focusing solely on the national curriculum is no longer an option. There are of course more than two avenues to academic success, and in other parts of the country and Latin America there are certainly bilingual schools that have taken other routes to success both in university preparation and local esteem. This thesis does not look to make a broad recommendation to all bilingual schools in the country, but rather schools set in

² Much of the information regarding the Santa Marta Bilingual School comes from the author's experience working there from 2005-2009.

³ Although it is geographically and politically inaccurate, the term "American" in this thesis refers specifically to the United States and not the other countries located in the Americas, reflecting standard usage among expats and its appearance in the name of several relevant institutions.

similar cultural settings as the ones looked at in this study, *La Costa*, Colombia's northern Caribbean coast.⁴

While the topic may seem parochial in scope, bilingual private education institutes enroll one-quarter of all students in the region.⁵ In comparison, private education in the United States constitutes around 11% of the whole and only seven percent in the United Kingdom.⁶ Because private education is so prevalent all across Latin America this topic provides a microcosm with which to view a decision making process that is being repeated all over the region. Both the International Baccalaureate and American accrediting agencies have made serious inroads into Latin America in recent years and their infrastructure and curricular requirements warrant examination in a Latin American setting.⁷ Also, much has been written about Colombian public education as well as that of its various indigenous groups, but elite private bilingual education is an area understudied and deserving further research.

Central Questions and Conclusions

There are three central questions that this thesis hopes to answer. First, what are the most popular options for prestigious bilingual schools on the Coast looking to make their curriculums internationally respectable? For a long time there have been schools on the Coast doing an excellent job preparing students for university, be it within Colombia or abroad. Some of these

⁴ Although Colombia has both a Pacific and Atlantic coast, the Colombian Caribbean is often referred to simply as *La Costa* (The Coast) but also as the Atlantic Coast or Caribbean Coast, and people from *La Costa* are known as *costeños*.

⁵ Lawrence Wolff, Juan Carlos Navarro and Pablo Gonzalez (eds.), Private Education and Public Policy in Latin America, Washington, D.C.: Preal, 2005, 1.

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Statistics. "Fast Facts." <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=65> Accessed: 06 February 2010 and The Independent. "Private School Stranglehold on Top Jobs." 15 June 2006. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/private-school-stranglehold-on-top-jobs-404079.html> Accessed: 05 February 2010.

⁷ Ecuador recently decided to implement the IB curriculum in 22 public schools, one in each department, in an effort to decrease the gap between public and private schools. Gloria McDowell. Senior Head of the Latin American International Baccalaureate Office in Buenos Aires Telephone interview with author. 6 August 2009.

schools had international affiliation, but many of them did not. This is changing, best evidenced by what for many years was the gold standard for education in the region, Marymount Barranquilla, which was recently accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.⁸ Schools are now seeking further evidence of their academic excellence and are doing so in one of two ways. Many, like Marymount Barranquilla, are seeking American accreditation, while a lesser number are becoming authorized to offer the rapidly expanding International Baccalaureate (IB).

The second question regards the requirements of each option, and the third examines the positives and negatives of those choices. Both the IB and American accrediting agencies have very specific and stringent requirements for schools that seek to offer their programs, some of which pose significant difficulties for schools working with the limited finances of a privately funded school in an economically underdeveloped nation. Both options offer advantages, such as becoming part of a global community of educators, an American diploma or universal University recognition, but also have negatives, not the least of which is the high price tag. The IB has faced accusations of being ethnocentric and American accrediting agencies have long fought complaints of being culturally imperialistic, both of which are looked at here. In the conclusion I will make some recommendations regarding which option is the best for schools at the crossroads.

For each of the three central questions asked in this research paper there are key terms that must be defined and theories that need to be explained. These terms and theories are important for understanding references and arguments that come later in the thesis. The most

⁸ Colegio Marymount Barranquilla. "November 2009." <http://www.marymountbq.edu.co/sitioweb/> Accessed: 15 November 2009.

important of these is an understanding of what I refer to when speaking of an “elite” or “prestigious” bilingual school. The perception of *costeño* culture in the region and Colombia as a whole also needs to be understood in order to see why international recognition of educational programs are so important.

School Profile⁹

The term “bilingual school” is used in a variety of contexts without necessarily having a shared meaning. Many of these *colegios bilingües* offer only a few more hours of English education than is offered in the public school system, especially since 2005’s National Bilingual Program. One way that the “elite” bilingual schools separate themselves from the other schools is to offer a Western/American curriculum to demonstrate superiority. Many of the newer schools do not have the organizational structure or money to seek accreditation or offer an international curriculum and therefore rely on the self-applied “*bilingüe*” to attract students.

Santa Marta has just under 415,270 people, according to the 2005 census.¹⁰ You see a good example of the disparity between private bilingual schools just by comparing three of the most popular in this city. The most popular bilingual school in the city is the Santa Marta Bilingual School, known locally as *The Bilingual School (El Bilingüe)*, which until recently was the name, and for many years was the only bilingual school in town.¹¹ The Bilingual School annually ranks first academically in the department of Magdalena (although the department

⁹ Most information regarding local school reputation comes from working and living at the Bilingual School as well as the informal relationship between all bilingual school teachers in a town, which has very few expatriates residing there.

¹⁰ DANE (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística). Censo General 2005. Bogotá: DANE, 2005, 486. <http://www.dane.gov.co/censo/files/libroCenso2005nacional.pdf>

¹¹ In 2008 the school officially changed its name from The Bilingual School of Santa Marta to the Santa Marta Bilingual School.

consistently finishes toward the bottom in the national rankings) not only in English but the academic core subjects as well.

Second to the SMBS, and indicative of the rise in demand for upper end bilingual education in the region and across the nation, is the Bureche School. Once a bilingual preschool, it has been adding a grade each year and graduated its first class in 2009.¹² Very similar to the Bilingual School in teaching methodology and student profiles, it is new and therefore lacking somewhat in tradition and academic installations. However the school boasts an American principal and several foreign teachers and has been making significant gains in recent years in student enrollment.

Following the Bilingual School and the Bureche is a large drop off in prestige. The next most well regarded school is the IDPHU (*Instituto para el Desarrollo del Potencial Humano*) school, which has open air facilities and usually employs one native speaker to teach one class a week to each grade, Transition (kindergarten) to 11th. The level of English education is far below that of the other two schools, as is the socioeconomic status of the students for the most part.¹³ The IDPHU, while a well-known school in some other areas of the country, is also new to Santa Marta, and graduated its first class in 2009.¹⁴ Although an enormous gap separates the education offered at the IDPHU and the Bilingual School, they both call themselves *colegios bilingües*, which can lead to confusion among the parents looking to provide a quality bilingual education for their children.

¹²Bureche School. "About us" http://www.colegiobureche.edu.co/eng/about_4.php Accessed: 05 February 2010.

¹³ Stephanie Grissom. Former IDPHU English instructor. Phone interview with author. 20 June 2009

¹⁴ Colegio IDPHU Campestre-Bilingüe. "Académico" <http://www.colegioidphu.com/Academico.html> Accessed: 31 January 2010.

We will be concerning ourselves with “elite” bilingual schools, mostly high end ones and those on the verge of becoming that level (such as SMBS), which is to say the most prestigious, expensive, and academically rigorous (for the most part) in the Caribbean coastal towns of Barranquilla, Cartagena and Santa Marta. For most of these schools, the national exit exam, the ICFES, is a poor indicator of the quality of education, especially since these elite bilingual schools do not abide too closely by the national curriculum that was developed to set minimum standards.¹⁵ Nor do they teach to the ICFES, but instead work to prepare their students for college. Nevertheless, ICFES scores are the way the government ranks the schools and most Colombian universities determine the college aptitude of students, and it is the only standardized measure that all the nation’s schools participate in.

In spite of their protests regarding the flaws of the ICFES, the schools discussed in this study are annually the best scoring schools in the region (and some in the country) on the exam. For example, while SMBS last year finished 120th in the country, it was first in its department of Magdalena. In Barranquilla, the three accredited schools, Marymount Barranquilla, Colegio Karl C. Parrish and Altamira, scored 1st, 2nd, and 8th in the department, with Marymount scoring 1st on the coast and 4th in the country. The International Baccalaureate schools did not fare as well, but they are often more dismissive of the ICFES, with the German School getting 6th in Barranquilla and the British School placing 11th. In Cartagena, the IB school COLBRICA and the US accredited school, Jorge Washington, placed 1st and 2nd in the department of Bolívar.¹⁶

The families

¹⁵ The ICFES is actually the name of the organization that creates the exam, but the exam itself is commonly referred to as the ICFES.

¹⁶ These numbers are from the academic year 2007-8. The national ICFES results are published each year in Dinero magazine. Dinero Magazine. “Los Mejores Colegios” 07 November 2008 <http://www.dinero.com/noticias-caratula/mejores-colegios/54048.aspx>, Accessed: 24 July 2009.

“Bilingual education in Colombia is associated principally with private bilingual schools set up to cater for the middle- and upper-middle-classes.”¹⁷ In Colombia it is very easy to determine exactly what socio-economic class someone is. The rich subsidize the basic utilities (water, gas, electricity) of the poor. The state determines how much you should pay by giving each neighborhood a number based on affluence, your *strata*. The *stratas* range from one to six, one being the poorest, six the richest.¹⁸ The people living in strata four, five and six pay on a sliding scale according to neighborhood for the utilities of the people living in stratas one, two and three. Of course not all strata six families are of exactly the same level of affluence, but it simplifies determining someone’s wealth for the purpose of utility payment. Nearly all of the students who attend the elite bilingual schools are strata six, although with a growing middle class some strata four and five families have begun attending the less expensive private bilingual schools, such as the Santa Marta Bilingual School.

The reason that only the strata six families attend these schools is because they are extremely expensive. The monthly minimum wage in the country is 515,000 Colombian pesos (just over \$250).¹⁹ The monthly fee per student at these schools is usually over twice this.²⁰ This is just the monthly fee. There is also an annual matriculation fee (*matricula*) that is more than the monthly fee. Finally, and most prohibitive of all, is the *donación*, a “donation” a family has to make to enter the school. Although it is technically illegal to force a family to donate to have

¹⁷A.M. de Mejía, “Bilingual Education in Colombia: Towards an Integrated Perspective” Bilingual Education and Bilingualism Vol 7:5, 2004, 387.

¹⁸Carlos Medina, Leonardo Morales and Jairo Núñez, Quality of Life in Urban Neighborhoods in Colombia: The Cases of Bogotá and Medellín Bogotá: Borradores de Economía, No. 536, 2008, 4.

¹⁹Tusalarío. “Salario mínimo: 515.000 pesos a partir de 2010” <http://www.tusalarío.org/colombia/Portada/salario-minimo/minimo> Accessed: 11 March 2010.

²⁰The monthly fee at COLBRICA in Cartagena ranges from 1,041,458 for pre-school to 1,110,401 for upper high school. These are coastal schools, and the fees are considerably more expensive in Medellín and Bogotá. Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Británico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009

their children admitted, it is standard operating procedure, and a family that fails to do so will find their children conveniently denied admission. This fee ranges from 10 to 20 million pesos, roughly between two and three *year's* salary for many Colombians, effectively excluding all but the richest.²¹

Ninety-five percent of the students who attend these bilingual schools are native Spanish-speaking Colombians.²² The remaining five percent are from bilingual families or part of transient families temporarily stationed in Colombia for business. For example, several of my students at SMBS were the children of Drummond employees. Drummond is an American coal mining company near Santa Marta.²³ However, many of the executives' children attended school in La Mina, a company-owned town where the company operates its own school. The high number of enrolled Colombian nationals is very different from the early/mid 20th century when many of the schools were founded as "American" schools serving mostly the children of foreign nationals, as will be further explored in chapter three.

The students generally graduate with a strong command of the English language.²⁴ Many of the schools offer the ACT, SAT, and TOEFL exams for their graduating students as a way to give wider validity to their educational program beyond the ICFES and help students gain access to foreign universities. Many of the national university programs require a certain score on the TOEFL before graduating, and students often take the exam before entering university in order

²¹ A.M. de Mejía, "The Medium of Instruction in Colombia" <http://cd1.edb.hkedcity.net/cd/scolar/html/projects/eng/e0798-1/Appendix2/Part2/Columbia.pdf> Accessed: 9 February 2010, 12.

²² Mejía, 11.

²³ Drummond Company, Inc. "Colombia" <http://www.drummondco.com/operations/coal/Colombia.aspx> Accessed: 01 February 2010.

²⁴ A.M. de Mejía and Harvey Tejada, "Bilingual Curriculum Construction and Empowerment in Colombia." International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism Vol 6:1, 37-51 2003, 39.

to get it out of the way and avoid taking English courses at the university level.²⁵ There is, however, a significant difference in the level of English spoken at some of the newer schools as compared to the more established ones. Students at the newer schools are often more reticent to immerse themselves in the language courses and are more likely to continue to code-switch at their convenience. This is due to a lack of established policy regarding English only use at the school (including passing periods at some of the oldest bilingual schools in the country), as well as the continued admission of non-bilingual transfer students beyond a set threshold (usually in second or third grade), which is designed to ensure the students have the opportunity to catch up with their classmates in language proficiency. This leads to classrooms containing several students who have very little English and actively work to stigmatize the language.

Relatively few of the parents speak English on a functional level, and according to one study in Cali, only 10-20% had studied at a bilingual school themselves.²⁶ They tend to have high expectations for the benefits of a bilingual education and constantly reinforce the importance of English language skills in the global marketplace, even to their elementary age children who gain an early appreciation for the utility of bilingualism. According to one home room teacher at SMBS, “when they come to pick up the grades, they don’t ask about math or science, all they ever ask about is how [the students] are doing in English.”²⁷

Due to the affluence of the families, many of the students have after-school tutors to reinforce the day’s lessons and help them with their homework, which many parents are not

²⁵ Personal conversations with many of the SMBS seniors and high school teachers.

²⁶ Mejia found that 9.7% at one school and 19.2% at another had studied at a bilingual school. The latter number coincides with my general experience teaching at the SMBS. Mejía, “Medium,” 12.

²⁷ Edward Chow-Worn, Santa Marta Bilingual School primary school teacher. Personal Interview with author, held in Santa Marta, Colombia. 14 June 2009.

capable of doing due to a lack of English language skills.²⁸ As in many places in the world, the students' English level is consolidated at home via movies and television. There are several stations on standard Colombian cable that are in English, with several others that allow you to change the language between Spanish and English, such as the Discovery Channel, History Channel, and Disney Channel.²⁹

Teachers

Foreign expertise at these schools is seen as extremely important to the parents, and often used to determine a school's status. Low end elite bilingual schools tend to employ native-speaking teachers that are not certified in their native country or Colombia and often lack extensive formal training in education. In contrast, the upper elite schools usually require that all native English-speaking teachers be certified in their native country, usually the United States, and if the school is accredited, the accrediting agency requires this.³⁰ Colombian law requires schools to have no more than 20% imported foreign teachers. Schools may apply for permission to increase that to 30% and most of the elite schools do so. "However, expatriate teachers living and working in Colombia are classed as local residents and therefore the numbers of foreign nationals working at any one time may be higher than the 20% stipulated by law."³¹ These foreign teachers tend to make much more than Colombian teachers and consume a sizable portion of the school's budget.³²

²⁸ Often these tutors are bilingual Colombian teachers from the school who work to subsidize their much lower salaries.

²⁹ Most students in my classes had DirecTV, as did I, which offers these services throughout the country.

³⁰ AdvancED Worldwide, "Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools in Latin American and other International Regions" February, 2007. http://www.advanc-ed.org/accreditation/standards/la_school_standards.pdf Accessed: July 28th, 2009, 34.

³¹ Mejia, "Medium" 10.

³² Fabiana Tribin. Santa Marta Bilingual School Chief Financial Officer, Santa Marta Bilingual School. Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009.

Foreign teachers generally teach foreign language, math, science, and social studies in English while Colombian teachers direct Spanish language classes, Physical Education, Art, Music and Religion in the first language. In some bilingual schools the foreign teacher has a Colombian teaching assistant to help manage the class and grade papers. In looking at Chart 1.1 you can see that the students have many more classes taught in English in primary school than in high school. The ratio begins to heavily favor Spanish in the final three years of secondary school in order to prepare students for the Spanish-administered ICFES; many schools feel they will perform better if the subject matter is presented to them in the language of the exam. The results for the Bilingual School are fairly typical of low level elite schools; however, schools that have American accreditation tend to favor English more heavily throughout as the ICFES is less of a priority and the accrediting agencies require a certain amount of courses be taught in English.³³

Table 1.1 Breakdown of English to Spanish Language Instruction at the Santa Marta Bilingual School During the 2008-9 Academic Year.³⁴

Grade Level	English	Spanish	Classes in English	Classes in Spanish
1 st - 4 th	64%	36%	Science, Math, Computer, Art, Religion, Social Studies and English	Spanish, P.E., Music and Colombian Studies (CS)
5 th	67%	33%	The same, but the students receive one less hour of P.E. and one more of Math.	
6 th	57%	43%	Science, Math, History, Art and English	Spanish, CS, Music and P.E.
7 th	47%	53%	Science, Math, History and English	Spanish, CS, Music P.E. and Art.
8 th	32%	68%	Some science, History and English.	Spanish, CS, Music, Math P.E., Art, and some Science
9 th	22%	78%	History and English	All other subjects
10 th -11 th	14%	86%	English	All other subjects

³³ Rob Leveille. Vice President of International Affairs, AdvancED. Telephone interview with author. 3 August 2009.

³⁴ This chart was compiled by the author while working at the school.

This results in a language instruction ratio of 54% Spanish, 46% English throughout the students education. Anne-Marie de Mejía found similar results examining an elite bilingual school in Cali.

Table 1.2: English to Spanish Language Instruction Ratio.

<u>Year</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Spanish</u>
Preschool 1	30%	70%
Preschool 2	50%	50%
Preschool 3	80%	20%
1 st -4 th grade	50%	50%
5 th Grade	40%	60%
6 th – 11 th	25%	75%

This results in a language instruction ratio of 9825 hours of Spanish (65%) and 5262 hours of English (35%) over the course of the students’ education.³⁵

There are several criticisms of the reliance on foreign teachers. The financial burden of these teachers often eats into the budget that could be providing professional language development to Colombian teachers. Also, the teachers at these schools have traditionally been a transient population, moving on after a few years and therefore not frequently identifying with the long term aims of the institution.³⁶ The standard initial “gringo” teacher contract is two years, which is exactly how long most teachers stay.³⁷ Lastly, the “dependence on foreign expertise has the disadvantage of perpetuating a mentality of underdevelopment.”³⁸

Books and Classrooms

The class size of private schools in Colombia is much lower than in public schools. Urban public schools frequently have 40-50 students per classroom with a single instructor.³⁹

³⁵ Mejia, “Medium,” 7,8.

³⁶Mejia, “Medium,” 13.

³⁷Patrick Gaffney. High school principal, Colegio Karl C. Parrish, Personal interview with author held in Barranquilla, Colombia, 18 June 2009.

³⁸ Mejia, “Medium,” 13.

³⁹ Mejia, 16.

Elite bilingual schools in contrast usually have between 20-25. Some schools have up to 35 students in a class, but with the help of a teaching assistant, the teacher/student ratio is cut to under 20. Most accrediting agencies specify the acceptable student/teacher ratio.⁴⁰ In my four years teaching, my homeroom had student counts of 20, 21, 26, and 16. SMBS does not have teaching assistants beyond the pre-school level.

Private school facilities generally mirror those found in an American school, with well-stocked libraries, science laboratories, cafeterias, audio-visual rooms, counselors' offices, auditoriums, covered sporting locations, etc. The classrooms are always air conditioned to combat the high temperatures on the Coast. Public schools (and many nascent "bilingual" schools) do not have air conditioning. Many of the students go to school in the evening to avoid the mid-day heat. They frequently lack many of the afore-mentioned facilities.

Many of the classroom materials are foreign textbooks, written for native speaking students. Marymount Barranquilla and SMBS use the Harcourt Trophies series, developed for native English speaking primary age students.⁴¹ SMBS frequently fell behind the recommended pace due to low student English levels and therefore often taught a half grade level behind the recommendations.⁴² According to one former SMBS high school history instructor, the English language history books were far above the reading level of the students and were developed for advanced American students.⁴³ The books are often touted by sales representatives from the large textbook companies and are too frequently purchased in order to demonstrate to the parents

⁴⁰ AdvancED, "Latin" 32, 33.

⁴¹ SMBS adopted the Trophies series in 2005, my first year at the school. The information regarding Marymount texts comes from Julia Schneider, former primary school teacher. Phone interview with author. 20 June 2009.

⁴² For example, 3rd grade students would finish the 2nd half of the second grade book and the first half of the 3rd grade book during the year.

⁴³ Adam Kostecki, former Santa Marta Bilingual School 6th-9th grade history teacher. Personal interview with author held in Santa Marta, Colombia. 14 June 2009.

a commitment to English language learning rather than for the attainment of a pedagogical goal or at the recommendation of the school's teachers/department heads.

Colombian students attend school Monday through Friday, for 33 weeks spread over 10 months. Schools observe one of two calendars; Calendar A runs from February until November and Calendar B from September until June. Both calendars have vacation at the same time, differing in lengths; Calendar A has a much longer winter break and B a much longer summer break. Most elite bilingual schools follow Calendar B, which follows the North American academic year, in order to accommodate the hiring of foreign teachers.

Coastal Culture

Colombia's Atlantic coast is very different from its interior, so much so that people have long looked at them as if they were two separate countries. "Had I limited my stay in Colombia to the cities of Cartagena and Santa Marta I would have left the country with an incorrect and unfair opinion about its people, since I do not think that there is a place so different from the provinces of the highlands than the provinces of the coast."⁴⁴ They are not separate countries as much as this early traveler cared to characterize them so. They have developed a very strong sense of nation through a shared political history, education, civil wars, business and national strife. However, the Coast is very different from the interior.

This is not to imply that the three main coastal cities are exactly the same. Santa Marta is not Cartagena, which as the star of Colombia's international tourism has a much more international and affluent population. Barranquilla is much larger and industrial than either Santa Marta or Cartagena, but they all share a very distinct culture and take great pride in calling themselves *costeños*.

⁴⁴ C.A. Gosselman, Viaje por Colombia, 1825 y 1826 Bogotá: Ediciones del Banco de la Republica, 1981, 373.

The colonization of Colombia introduced a hierarchy where Spaniards were at the top and slaves and Indians were at the bottom. The Caribbean Coast quickly became the port of entry for a sizable slave trade as well as the victim of frequent pirate attacks and the avenue for illegal commerce. The colonial government wanted to create some distance between this situation and the seat of power, and did so by establishing their cultural and religious centers in the highlands of Bogotá. Born of this colonial legacy, the two areas are described in very different terms.

People from the interior are referred to as *cachacos* and, as previously mentioned, those from the Coast are referred to as *costeños*. Marisol Garrido's attitudinal study described the perceived difference, stating that *cachacos* are "usually described as very formal and aristocratic people while the *costeños* are verbally outgoing, superstitious, dancers, adventurers, people full of gaiety."⁴⁵ The same study found that both *cachacos* and *costeños* evaluated coastal culture as "the friendliest" in the nation.⁴⁶ However, *costeños* are also often referred to "with the perjorative *corroncho* – the cradle of laziness, corruption, nepotism, machismo, excessive drinking and irresponsibility."⁴⁷

The two regions speak very different Spanish as well. "In Colombia the sociolinguistic prestige of the capital dialect is immense, and although coastal residents are rarely able to effect even a distant approximation to the speech of Bogotá, this mode of speaking is constantly held up as the goal of all educated Colombians."⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Marisol Garrido, "Language Attitude in Colombian Spanish: Cachacos vs. Costeños" *LL Journal*, 2:2, 2007, <http://ojs.gc.cuny.edu/index.php/lljournal/article/viewFile/246/345> page 1, Accessed: 05 February 2010

⁴⁶ Garrido, 4.

⁴⁷ Santiago Gamboa, "On the Creation of a Colombian National Identity through crime Fiction." *Boston Review*, Summer 2001.

⁴⁸ John M. Lipinski, *Latin American Spanish* London and New York: Longman, 1994, 207.

The prevalence of the negative stereotypes regarding costeño speech and work ethic influences educational decisions. The coastal schools are competing amongst themselves for students, but also fighting for recognition of their academic programs by outside entities. Elite schools are aware of the unfavorable perception of costeño academics and its possible influence on university admissions officers, especially since most of their students go to the interior for tertiary education. This perception is one reason schools seek international accreditation or affiliation, as a third party validates the quality of education.

Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first of these looks at relevant publications and prevailing and past theory relevant to this thesis. It is subdivided into four areas of study. The first examines Colombian regionalism, its rise in current literature and current reputation. The second aims to find a working definition of the phrase “bilingual education.” The third explores issues surrounding American accrediting agencies and the fourth does the same for the International Baccalaureate.

The second chapter looks at the long violent history of Colombia and places its educational history within its context, with a particular focus on recent history regarding bilingual education. It begins with Independence and the creation of Gran Colombia, which dissolved following the death of Simón Bolívar in 1830. The liberals and conservatives fought for power until the breakout of the Thousand Days War in 1898. The two parties put aside open conflict for a number of years until they flared up again with the assassination of liberal presidential candidate Jorge Gaitán in 1948, resulting in riots and period of violence (*La Violencia*) lasting until the 1960's. Many rebel groups formed during *La Violencia* that continue to fight an insurgency campaign until the present day. In this context of constant violence the

creation of a stable, cogent education policy was impossible, but efforts were made. Santander, who assumed the presidency after Bolívar, tried to install a European Lancastrian monitorial system for many years with minimal success. The 1887 Concordat gave the Catholic Church broad rights and responsibilities concerning the country's education. The period following the Thousand Days War was the beginning of an improvement in education and enrollment, both of which would spike following World War II. The 1968 education reforms decentralized the education system and created the ICFES. The 1991 Constitution finally offered free universal basic education up to 9th grade. The General Law of Education in 1994 required that all schools teach a second language, and 2005 saw the unveiling of the National Bilingual Program that mandated that the second language be English and sought to expand the nation's bilingual program.

The third chapter looks at the history of American accrediting agencies, with a focus on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The agencies were founded by universities in the absence of a federal system of enforcing school standards. Following World War II the accrediting agencies began to look abroad and divided the world among themselves, with the SACS being given Latin America and the Caribbean. SACS moved into Colombia in the early 1960's and began accrediting schools in the major cities. They received a lot of support from the federal government and the University of Alabama, which helped in their rapid expansion. In those early years the accredited schools were basically islands of Americanism. This has changed over the last 10 years, and international accreditation requirements have loosened to make it a simpler process for quality foreign schools. The chapter goes on to discuss Colegio Karl. C. Parrish, an example of the accrediting process in the 1960's. The Altamira school is then examined in order to juxtapose the old process with the new. It also affords a

close examination of the current standards and stipulation of American accreditation. The following section highlights the advantages of accreditation, such as international degree recognition, access to an international educational network of support, and access to better teachers. The chapter closes with a discussion of the disadvantages of accreditation, such as cost, short teacher tenure and accusations of cultural imperialism.

The fourth chapter looks at the International Baccalaureate (IB). It begins with the history of the IB from its pre-WWII stirrings to the creation of its unique curriculum and consequent expansion into the United States. It moves on to the global expansion of the IB with a focus on its history in Latin America and Colombia specifically. The chapter then looks at the specifics of the curriculum, beginning with the course groupings, and moving on to the Theory of Knowledge course, the CAS program, the extended essay and the grading scale. Following this is an in-depth look at the process of becoming an IB school: the Feasibility Study, Candidate Status, and an Authorization visit. One school on the coast, Colegio Británico de Cartagena (COLBRICA) that offers the IB, is not happy with the program and is considering dropping it. One section looks at why the school chose to use the program as well as why they feel it is not working. The following section considers the potential benefits of the IB program including its ability to prepare students for tertiary education, getting the students into the university, getting them university credit for high school courses and the connection to the IB's worldwide network of educators. The negative aspects of the Programme are covered next, including the costs that exceed those of SACS accreditation, the inability to get affordable teacher training in Colombia, the few students in IB schools who attempt the Diploma, and criticisms of the curriculum as Eurocentric and culturally imperialistic.

Methodology

The arguments that I make in this thesis will be supported by primary and secondary sources that are both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative research is based on a series of interviews I conducted with various members of the local Colombian academic community, including principals, superintendents, school board members, and teachers as well as with members of the relevant institutions outside of the region. I also call on my experience living on the coast and working at SMBS for the last four years.

Much of the quantitative information is taken from AdvancED, the accrediting organization that oversees SACS and keeps statistics on all the schools it has accredited. Other statistical information was provided by the International Baccalaureate Organization, which keeps records on all IB schools. Much of the information from the schools was provided by the schools themselves or their websites. Some data regarding education statistics was obtained from Colombia's National Statistics Administrative Department (*Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística* or DANE)

In the chapter focusing on accrediting agencies (Chapter 3), I was compelled to rely on information from the agencies themselves due to a lack of valid secondary sources. I attempted to adjust for this by interviewing several people involved in the accreditation process who worked at the schools rather than the agencies, including one, Dr. Gaffney who previously worked for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges accrediting agency and is now the high school principal of Colegio Karl C. Parrish in Barranquilla. The agency documents were typically used to determine the requirements of the accreditation process and what it offers those considering candidacy, as well as statistics regarding schools in their network. The accreditation process was verified by interviews at three schools (Altamira, Colegio Karl C. Parrish and Marymount Barranquilla) that have gone through the process.

Chapter One: Theory and Relevant Literature.

This thesis hopes to add to several areas of study. It does not seek to be a regional history, but it hopes to add to the regional history. It does not hope to define bilingual education or suggest a best way to do it, but it does mean to give an opinion on the best way to do it in a particular type of school in a particular place. It does not hope to evaluate the International Baccalaureate as a curriculum, but it does hope to evaluate its suitability for private elite bilingual schools on Colombia's coast. Similarly, it hopes to evaluate American accreditation and offer some insight into the ways in which it is spreading in the region. It hopes to do all of these things within the scope of broader studies offering background and frames within which to work.

This thesis focuses on a very specific region of Colombia, the northern Caribbean Coast. Historians and geographers love to debate the definition of region. Here *region* is defined as "areas of distinctive character" that are "clearly distinguishable from each other" and as "areas of interrelated activities, kindred interests and common organization," all of which certainly apply to the area studied here.⁴⁹ The view of Colombia as a collection of regions is now widely accepted by historians, best exemplified by Anthony McFarlane's pre-Independence history, which claimed it was a "mosaic of regions, each isolated from the others by long distances and difficult terrain, and distinguished by cultural differences arising from variations in the local blend of Europeans, Indians and Africans."⁵⁰ However, Colombia is more than just a collection

⁴⁹ B. Anderson, Imagined Communities London: Verso, 1983. J.H. Love, "An Approach to Regionalism" in R. Graham and P. Smith (eds.) New Approaches to Latin American History Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974.

⁵⁰ Anthony McFarlane, Colombia Before Independence. Economy, Society, and Politics under Bourbon Rule. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 31.

of disparate regions, and as Malcolm Deas points out, the idea of nation should not be neglected in enthusiasm for regional history.⁵¹

Questions of region and regionalism have been gaining traction in Latin America for a few decades. Attention to Colombian regionalism began with the problems of consolidating the nation following Independence. These focused on questions of when the nation began to exist as a united entity, how regional elites related to national elites and government, and the territorial definition of the republic.⁵² The study of regional movements within national politics has not received the scholarly attention it should, however.⁵³ When regions and regionalism are studied, they traditionally fall into two categories. The first is to take the region as a representative case of the problem under study.⁵⁴ The second presents regions as a variant case of a problem, which isolates the region for the sake of emphasizing diversity, the approach taken in Magnus Morner's *Region and State in Latin America's Past*.⁵⁵

Colombian historiography has long focused on the Antioquia region (where Medellín is located). This is usually attributed to the region's relative excellence in record keeping and several entrepreneurial patrons.⁵⁶ Recently there has been more study of other Colombian

⁵¹ Malcom Deas, Aspectos polémicos de la historia colombiana del siglo XIX. Memoria de un seminario. Bogotá: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 1983, 198.

⁵² Marco Palacios, (ed.) La unidad nacional en América Latina: Del regionalismo a la nacionalidad Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1983 and Marco Palacios. Estado y clases sociales en Colombia Bogotá: Procultura, 1986, 87-149.

⁵³ There have been some good regional histories best exemplified by J. H. Love, Rio Grande do Sul and Brazilian Regionalism, 1882-1930 Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1971, and Guy Thompson, Puebla de los Angeles; Industry and Society in a Mexican City, 1700-1850 London: Westview Press, 1989.

⁵⁴ Love, 140.

⁵⁵ Magnus Morner, Region and State in Latin America's Past Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993.

⁵⁶ Roger Brew, Los studios regionales en Colombia: el caso de Antioquia, Medellín: 1982.

regions. Examples include D.C. Johnson's work on Santander, the Universidad del Valle's work on the Valle del Cauca, and Jane Rausch's work on Los Llanos.⁵⁷

Gene H. Bell-Villada once claimed that Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* served to fill the vacuum of regional study of the coast.⁵⁸ This is as amusing as it is erroneous. The area deserves further study of course, but it has received its fair share. Nineteen Seventy-Three saw the publishing of Theodore Nichols' pioneering *Tres Puertos de Colombia*, a historical geography of the region focusing on the development difficulties of Barranquilla, Cartagena and Santa Marta.⁵⁹ Cartagena has received more subsequent attention than the other two major coastal cities, with two significant works published in 1983: Anthony McFarlane's work on the colonial period, and Eduardo Lemaitre's four volume study of the city until 1940.⁶⁰ Villalón Donoso's *Historia de Barranquilla* is an excellent recent city history of Barranquilla.⁶¹ Krogzemis' doctoral thesis, *A Historical Geography of the Santa Marta Area*, is frequently cited in books on the city and the department of Magdalena.⁶² Manuel J. Díaz-Granados's *Geografía económica del Magdalena Grande (1946-55)* is parochial but gives good insight into the time when some of the schools in this study were being founded.⁶³ Furthermore, a good cross section of the many articles and essays treating the region were compiled in Gustavo Bell's *El Caribe*

⁵⁷ D.C. Johnson, *Santander siglo XIX: Cambios socio-economicos* Bogotá, 1984; Universidad del Valle (ed.) *Sociedad y economía en el Valle del Cauca*, 5 vols. Bogotá: Banco Popular, 1983; and Jane Rausch, *The Llanos Frontier in Colombian History, 1830-1930*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993.

⁵⁸ Gene H. Bell-Villada, *García Márquez: The Man and His Work*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990, 23-4.

⁵⁹ Theodore E. Nichols, *Tres Puertos de Colombia* Bogotá: Banco Popular, 1973.

⁶⁰ Anthony McFarlane, *Comerciantes y monopolio en la Nueva Granada: el consulado de Cartagena de Indias* ACoHSC, 11 Bogotá: 1983, 43-70 and Eduardo Lemaitre, *Historia general de Cartagena* 4 vols. Bogotá: Banco de La Republica, 1983, 4 vols.

⁶¹ Jorge Villalón Donoso, *Historia de Barranquilla*, Barranquilla: Ediciones Uninorte, 2000.

⁶² J. Krogzemis, "A Historical Geography of the Santa Marta Area, Colombia" Ph.D thesis, University of California, Berkely, 1967. <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=AD0657858> Accessed: 15 May 2009.

⁶³ Manuel J. Díaz-Granados, *Geografía económica del Magdalena Grande (1946-55)*. Santa Marta: Gráficas Gutenberg, 1996.

colombiano.⁶⁴ The most ambitious regional work on the coast is Orlando Fals Borda's *Historia Doble de la Costa* dealing with topics ranging from the conquest until 1976 although its scope, sources and empirical research has been questioned.⁶⁵ A comprehensive and detailed recent work that attends to the region's exceptionalism while recognizing its integration with the nation as whole is Eduardo Posada-Carbo's *The Colombian Caribbean*.⁶⁶

Many of the Atlantic Coast's regional histories discuss the differences between the region and Colombia's interior. These histories usually cite numerous reasons for the region's distinctiveness. La Costa's climate is unmistakably tropical, while most of Colombia's population lives in the cooler climate of the Andean highlands. The coast's humid climate permitted extraordinary fertility that attracted international attention seeking to exploit its resources, beginning with timber, indigo, and rubber and later cotton, bananas, cacao, sugar, tobacco and rice. The plantations required the introduction of slaves (usually of African origin) to compensate for the surfeit of labor in the sparsely populated region, something that never happened in the interior. "By the end of the eighteenth century, it was estimated that more than 60 percent of the Coastal population was of a mixed race."⁶⁷ The interior of the country never used African slave labor extensively and their racial complexion is very different from that of the coast still today.

Another distinction of the Atlantic coast is its differing social institutions and values. "Only a few traces of Catholicism, and not very clear ones, remain in the conscience of these people. In the central part of the Magdalena there are still some little half-ruined churches from

⁶⁴ Gustavo Bell Lemus (ed.), *El Caribe Colombiano* Barranquilla: Universidad del Norte, 1988

⁶⁵ Orlando Fals Borda, *Historia doble de la Costa Atlántica: Mompo y Loba Bogotá* Carlos Valencia Editores 1980.

⁶⁶ Eduardo Posada-Carbo, *The Colombian Caribbean: A Regional History, 1870 – 1950* Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1996.

⁶⁷ F. Silvestre, *Descripción del Reyno de Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1789* Bogotá, 1968, 49-51. Silvestre's racial breakdown was whites (11%), indians (18%), slaves (8%) freemen of all colors (63%).

the time of the Spaniards, but they are rarely visited by a priest.”⁶⁸ The lack of church influence was demonstrated in the proliferation of free unions, lack of native-born priests and religious tolerance. “Men have the feeling that nothing will be left of them when they die, and therefore they do not have to worry about their reputation; eager to live, to enjoy life; the present is their only concern.”⁶⁹ Both the church and the central government had difficulty influencing the region due to distance, transportation difficulties between the regions, and a focus on the development of the interior. “Since I set foot on the Colombian Coast I have understood the anomaly of having concentrated national development in the Andean highlands, nine hundred miles from the sea.”⁷⁰ The area remained underdeveloped economically, lax regarding religion, and with a sizeable African influence that created a culture independent of the interior that persists to this day.

Bilingual Education

“Bilingual education itself is not a discipline, it is an interdisciplinary activity.”⁷¹

Because of this, bilingualism and bilingual education are difficult to define. Besides educational linguistic perspectives, some researchers approach them politically,⁷² while others analyze them economically.⁷³ Linguists concentrate on linguistic aspects of bilingual speech;⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Friedrich von Schenck, Viajes por antioquia en el año de 1880 Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1953, 12.

⁶⁹ L. Striffler, El Río San Jorge Gobernación del Atlántico, Barranquilla, 1995 [1886], 80.

⁷⁰ Miguel Cané, En viaje, 1881 – 1882 Paris, 1884, 131-2.

⁷¹ Joshua Fishman. Bilingual education: an international sociological perspective. Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1976, 124.

⁷² Monica Heller, Crosswords: Language, Education and Ethnicity in French Ontario New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994. Monica Heller, Linguistic Minorities and Modernity: a Sociolinguistic Ethnography New York: Longman. 1999.

⁷³ Florian Coulmas. Language and Economy. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.

⁷⁴ Shana Poplack, “Sometimes I’ll Start a Sentence in English y Termino en Español; Toward a Typology of Code-Switching” Linguistics 18:7/8, 1980: 581-618. This is a good example of a linguistic approach.

psycholinguists research how language is acquired and processed;⁷⁵ neurolinguistics study the neural mechanisms that control comprehension and language acquisition.⁷⁶ Some researchers take a historical approach to bilingualism,⁷⁷ while educationalists investigate how educational institutions help people become bilingual.⁷⁸ Lastly, and most pertinent to this study, sociolinguists situate bilingual education in social context.⁷⁹

Bilingual education has consequently received enormous amounts of research and publication throughout the years without any general consensus being reached about the best way to do it or even a fixed definition of what the term ‘bilingual education’ means. Besides its interdisciplinary nature, another reason there is not a universally agreed upon way to educate is that bilingual education requires different tactics in different places. The best way to implement an English immersion program in Indonesia may not be the best way to do it in Colombia due to their differing cultural perspectives, resources and goals. This paper inserts itself into the discussion by looking at how prestigious bilingual schools on the Caribbean coast do it and examining which of their programs is most suitable for other bilingual schools in the region.

Bilingual education can apply to many disparate types of schooling. The techniques for teaching Spanish to a minority group with no written language and a strong oral tradition is

⁷⁵ Best exemplified by Francois Grosjean, Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982. Francois Grosjean, “The Bilingual as a Competent but Specific Speaker-Hearer. Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 6, 1985: 467-477.

⁷⁶ Franco Fabbro, The Neurolinguistics of Bilingualism: An Introduction Hove: Psychology Press, 1999, M. Paradis, “Neurolinguistics of Bilingualism and the Teaching of Languages” Brain and Language 71, 2000, 178-180. These form a growing group of neurolinguists doing work on bilingualism.

⁷⁷ E. Glyn Lewis, “Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: The Ancient World to the Renaissance” in Bernard Spolsky and Robert L. Cooper (eds.) Frontiers of Bilingual Education Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1977 is an example.

⁷⁸ Merrill Swain and Sharon Lapkin, Evaluating Bilingual Education: A Canadian Case Study, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1981, Virginia Collier and Carlos Ovando, Bilingual and ESL Classrooms: Teaching in Multicultural Contexts Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998 and Colin Baker, Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2006 are indicative of this approach.

⁷⁹ Joshua Fishman, 1972, 1976, 1977 (see bibliography) and N. H. Hornberger, “Extending Enrichment Bilingual Education: Revisiting Typologies and Redirecting Policy” in O. García (ed.) Bilingual Education: Focusschrift in Honor of Joshua A. Fishman, Vol 1, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1991.

completely different than teaching English at a prestigious bilingual or international school. While there exists a well-established tradition of publication relating to the education of indigenous communities in Latin America, the study of bilingual education programs for majority language (Spanish and Portuguese) speakers is relatively new, in spite of the fact that the programs have existed since the early 19th century in some South American countries.⁸⁰

The different types of bilingual education have been classified using a variety of terms. Most basically they are separated into ‘maintenance,’ ‘transitional’ and the newer and less frequently employed “enrichment’ programs. Transitional programs refer to those that bring about fluency in the second language to the detriment of the first language and have the basic aim of language shift, cultural assimilation and social incorporation.⁸¹ The term is often used in discussions of American ESL programs that segregate students with low level English and teach them initially in their native tongue until they can handle monolingual education. The term also has a long history of publication and broad application in the acculturation efforts aimed at the various indigenous groups in Colombia and throughout the world.

Maintenance programs are those that seek to have students reach fluency in both languages. They seek maintenance of the learner’s first language, strengthening of their cultural identity and the affirmation of civil rights.⁸² To again put this in the American context, maintenance bilingual education has different goals from transitional programs, the former of which involve the development of the second language while maintaining the level of the first,

⁸⁰ C. Banfi and R. Day, “The Evolution of Bilingual Schools in Argentina” in A.M. de Mejía (ed.), Bilingual Education in South America, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon: 2005, 68.

⁸¹ Hornberger, N. H. “Extending Enrichment Bilingual Education: Revisiting Typologies and Redirecting Policy” in O. García (ed.) Bilingual Education: Focusschrift in Honor of Joshua A. Fishman, Vol 1, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1991, 8.

⁸² Hornberger, 13.

and its duration is commonly greater. A good example of this is the Heritage Language Program in Canada, which teaches using the first language in 50% of instruction.⁸³

Enrichment education is similar to the maintenance model in that it seeks to create bilingual students, but differs significantly in that it has the goal of moving beyond maintenance of the native tongue to improving *both* languages. “This model encourages cultural pluralism and the development of the social autonomy of cultural groups and refers to both language minority and majority speakers.”⁸⁴ All of the schools in this study strive to offer enrichment education, with the improvement of both languages and the ultimate goal of mastery in English and Spanish. Some scholars associate this type of education with immersion education. Fishman’s *Bilingual education for Hispanic students in the United States* criticized immersion education as catering to students of “the most fortunate socio-economic background” and “a direct descendent of elitest’ bilingual education.”⁸⁵ The schools examined here are not immersion programs, but more aptly characterized as dual-language enrichment programs that use both languages in content area instruction.

Education in Colombia has received considerable recent study. Much of this work has looked at the reforms of 1968,⁸⁶ the Escuela Nueva,⁸⁷ the 1991 Constitution,⁸⁸ the general

⁸³ Baker, 7.

⁸⁴ A.M. de Mejia, A.M. Power, Prestige and Bilingualism: International Perspectives on Elite Bilingual Education Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2002, 44.

⁸⁵ Joshua A. Fishman, Bilingual Education for Hispanic Students in the United States New York: Teachers College Press, 1982, 25.

⁸⁶ A good examination of the reforms and their aftermath can be found in Mark E. Hanson, Educational Reform and Administrative Development: The Cases of Colombia and Venezuela Stanford, CA: Hoover Institutional Press, 1986.

⁸⁷Ernesto Schiefelbein, Redefining Basic Education for Latin America: Lessons to be Learned from the Colombian Escuela Nueva UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, 1992. And George Psacharopoulos, Carlos, Rojas and Eduardo Velez, "Achievement Evaluation of Colombia's Escuela Nueva: Is Multigrade the Answer?" Comparative Education Review, Vol. 37:3, August 1993.

⁸⁸ Stephen J. Ball, Gustavo Fischman and Silvina Gvirtz. Crises and Hope: The Educational Hopscotch of Latin America. NY: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003.

education law of 1994,⁸⁹ and especially the National Bilingual Program of 2005.⁹⁰ The most significant research in relation to this particular study is that of Anne-Marie de Mejía. In her books she characterizes and compares the developments of enrichment bilingual programs, Spanish education for minority groups, and bilingual curriculum construction.⁹¹ She looks closely at prestigious bilingual schools and their history and profile and has done extensive research at one such school in Cali. Mejía calls for further study in the diverse types of bilingual schools in Colombia, and this thesis answers that call to a degree by looking at specific schools and their academic programs.

This paper does not add to the discussion of the different types of bilingual education programs, but rather looks solely at the enrichment model, which is employed at all of the prestigious schools referred to here. Along the lines of Banfi and Day in Argentina or Mejía in Cali this study looks at the enrichment models in particular schools in Colombia and by expanding the pool of examined schools, deepens the field of study.⁹² It also does not propose a best way to educate students in bilingual schools in general, but rather takes a specific school and looks at its future options and, using other similar but more established schools as a guide, hopes to develop a suggestion for this school and other schools in the region (or similar regions elsewhere with equally limited resources) that will soon come to the same crossroads.

American Accreditation

⁸⁹ George J. Borjas and Olga Lucía Acosta. "Educational Reform in Colombia" In Alberto Alesina, Institutional Reforms: The Case of Colombia. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T., 2005, 245.

⁹⁰ John Wells, "Trying to Meet the Demands of English in a Global Market: A Critical Discussion of the National Bilingual Programme in Colombia" International Educational Studies, Vol 1:1. Feb, 2008. Good critical discussion of the National Bilingual Program.

⁹¹ A.M. de Mejía, Power, Prestige and Bilingualism: International Perspectives on Elite Bilingual Education Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2002. A. M. de Mejía, Bilingual Education in South America Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2004.

⁹² C. Banfi, and R. Day, "The Evolution of Bilingual Schools in Argentina" in A.M. de Mejía (ed.), Bilingual Education in South America, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon: 2005.

International education has seen some published research, although certainly not to the degree of many other types of education. Much of that research has looked at American schools abroad, which necessitates an examination of the American accreditation process and requirements. This academic investigation has taken place all over the globe, including in Colombia and even at one of the schools in this thesis. Dr. Burton Fox was involved in early accreditation efforts in Colombia, both in Medellín and Barranquilla. His doctoral dissertation still stands as the most comprehensive account of the early days of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in Colombia and offers a good opportunity for comparison with the process as it exists today.⁹³ This study hopes to add to the field of study by looking at two schools that are accredited in Barranquilla, one established and one recently accredited and use them as a lens to view the accreditation process in Coastal Colombia, and its suitability for the region and these types of school. It also touches on the accusations of acculturation and imperialism, which are the topic of a growing number of publications.

Social control theory did not begin to be applied to schools in scholarly publications until 1968 when Wiley and Zald published their *The Growth and Transformation of Educational Accrediting Agencies: An Exploratory Study in Social Control of Institutions*.⁹⁴ They propose that simply by subjecting themselves to the accreditation process they lose a degree of control of their schools to the American accreditation system. A more recent look at this idea, and the idea that 'American schools' in other nations might cause acculturation, anomie or identity crises by inculcating Colombian citizens with a North American focused education, can be found in the

⁹³ Burton Fox, "The Question of Accreditation Overseas: A Comparative Study of Accredited and Non-Accredited Schools in Latin America." Unpublished dissertation, University of Alabama, 1969.

⁹⁴ Mary Glenn Wiley and N. Zald Mayer, "The Growth and Transformation of Educational Accrediting Agencies: An Exploratory Study in Social Control of Institutions" Sociology of Education, 1968.

work of Gilbert Brown and Anne-Marie de Mejía.⁹⁵ In addition, two interesting accounts by former students at accredited schools on the coast both touch on the topic of cultural imperialism in these institutions.⁹⁶ This paper does not look specifically or vigorously at this topic, but it is impossible to make recommendations without taking social control into account.

The International Baccalaureate has received a lot of attention since its beginnings in the late 1960s, mostly for its prominence in the Western world where many of the researchers reside, but also because its creation was somewhat revolutionary. The story of its creation has been well told by many of the people involved. There has also been an explosion of recent research looking at the program's suitability for American public schools. However, there has not been a lot of analysis of whether the program is suitable to Colombia, where the educational system has considerably less resources in both the public and private sector than many countries that employ the program. This paper hopes to fill that void somewhat. There has also been a running academic debate over charges of cultural imperialism inherent in the curriculum. This thesis will not broach that topic but it does look at some schools that use or have used the curriculum and offers their thoughts on the matter.

Many of the actors in the creation of the International Baccalaureate have written accounts of its early trials and tribulations. Sometimes called 'the father of the IB,' Robert Leach was the first to do so, followed by Gerard Renaud and later, Alec Peterson.⁹⁷ Following

⁹⁵ Gilbert C. Brown, "International Education or International Schools: Would I Know Them If I Saw Them?" Journal of the Association for the Advancement of International Education Vol. 34: 104, 2007. A.M. de Mejía, "Bilingual Education in Colombia: Towards and Integrated Perspective" in A.M. de Mejía (ed.), Bilingual Education in South America Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005, 48-64, 60.

⁹⁶ Marjorie C. Ringler, "Free Trade Agreement in Educational Leadership" <http://cnx.org/content/m17180/latest/> Accessed: 7 July 2009 and Silvana Paternostro, My Colombian War: A Journey Through the Country I Left Behind New York: H. Holt and Co., 2007.

⁹⁷ Robert J. Leach, International Schools and Their Role in the Field of International Education Oxford: Pergamon, 1969, Gerard Renaud, "La Période Expérimentale du Baccalauréat International: Objectifs et Résultats," International Bureau of Education (IBE) Bulletin, 14, 1973, and Alec D.C. Peterson. Schools Across Frontiers Chicago, IL: La Salle, 2003 (originally published in 1987).

those first-hand accounts much of the work has looked at the program's adoption in the United States, beginning in Ernest Boyer's critique of US public education, which singled out the IB as a model of quality.⁹⁸ Shortly thereafter, Elisabeth Fox examined the expansion of the IB in North America and looked at its prospects for further development.⁹⁹ The debate about the program's suitability in the US is probably best exemplified by Jay Mathews' *Supertest*, although this has been criticized by some as lacking objectivity.¹⁰⁰

One criticism of the IB in the United States and elsewhere has been that it is Eurocentric and contributes to a process of globalization. The topic is looked at in a series of articles in Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson's *International Education: Principles and Practice*. More recently a series of back and forth articles has emerged debating the topic with the IB's Director General, Ian Hill on one side and Paris on the other.¹⁰¹

Not a lot of study has been directed at particular schools employing the International Baccalaureate. Mathews' book, which looks closely at the adoption process and struggles of an American public school in Virginia, is probably the most comprehensive.¹⁰² Even less has been published on the program's use in Latin America. Elisabeth Fox looks at the IB in Chile, but there are no similar studies in other Latin American countries, something that needs

⁹⁸ E. L. Boyer, *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America*, New York: Harper & Row, 1983.

⁹⁹ Elisabeth Fox, "International Schools and the International Baccalaureate" *Harvard Educational Review* 55:1 1985: pp 53-68.

¹⁰⁰ Jay Mathews and Ian Hill. *Supertest: How the International Baccalaureate Can Strengthen Our Schools* La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2005. McKenzie, Malcolm. "Book Review: Supertest: How the International Baccalaureate Can Strengthen Our Schools" *Journal of Research in International Education* 4: 2005.

¹⁰¹ Ian Hill, "Do International Baccalaureate Programs Internationalise or globalise?" *International Education Journal*, 2006. Paris, P. "The International Baccalaureate: A Case Study on Why Students Choose to Do the IB" *International Education Journal*, 3 (2), 232-243. Hill frequently cites Walker as supporting his case. G. Walker, *To Educate the Nations: Reflections on an International Education* (2nd edn.) Suffolk, UK: Peridot Press, 2004.

¹⁰² Mathews, Jay and Ian Hill. *Supertest: How the International Baccalaureate Can Strengthen Our Schools*. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2005.

rectification.¹⁰³ This study is not an overview of the IB in Colombia but instead focuses on the adoption of the program by specific schools in the coastal region. There are many studies debating the merits of the International Baccalaureate versus the Advanced Placement used in college preparatory schools.¹⁰⁴ Most of these studies offer no conclusions on which is better overall as student goals need to be taken into account. This study is similar to those studies, but replaces AP with American accreditation (many of these schools do offer at least some International AP courses) and places the discussion in a real context.

Chapter Two: The History of Colombian Education

Education does not take place in a vacuum, it happens in a place. This thesis examines a very specific place, the northern Caribbean coast of Colombia, usually referred to as *La Costa*. The location of the debate has serious ramifications on the recommendations that I offer regarding the best way for elite bilingual schools to educate their students moving into the future. The *costeños* who live on La Costa have a culture very much their own that influences the way that they view and value education as well as what aspects of schooling focus on. In order to understand what path to take, it is first necessary to understand the place and the history of both Colombia in general, and the Caribbean coast.

Colombia is a predominantly Spanish speaking country located where Central America opens to the South American continent. The only South American country with access to both

¹⁰³ Elisabeth Fox “The Role of the International Baccalaureate in Educational Transformation: Chile as a Case Study.” in Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson (eds.) International Education: Principles and Practice, London: Kogan page, Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Robin M. Kyburg, Holly Hertberg-Davis and Carolyn M. Callahan. “Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs: Optimal Learning Environments for Talented Minorities?” Journal of Advanced Academics, 18:2, 2007: 172-215. Stephanie A. Nugent and Frances A. Karnes, “The Advanced Placement Program and the International Baccalaureate Programme: A History and Update” Gifted Child Today 25:1, 2002: 30-39. Fairfaxcaps.org. “International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) Program and Analogies: Choosing the Program That Is Right for Your Child.” http://fairfaxcaps.org/pdf/January_14_meeting_CAPS_Analogy_speech_V2.pdf Accessed: 14 March 2010.

the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, it has a total land area of 1,109,104 (a bit less than twice the size of Texas), 26th largest in the world, second largest in South America, located entirely in the tropics and transected in its southern region by the Equator.¹⁰⁵ The geography of the country is incredibly diverse for a nation of its relatively small size. The northeastern Guajira peninsula consists largely of sparsely populated deserts. The *costenos* of the Caribbean coast constitute a very different population and culture from the *cachacos* (people from the interior) and live in typical coastal Caribbean climates, with a wet and dry season and an average of almost 29° C annually. The two largest cities, the capital Bogota (2,600 meters) and Medellin (1,500 meters) are both situated in the Andean Cordilleras and respectively average 14° and 22°.¹⁰⁶ Nearly 60% of Colombia's area is located in the jungles of the Orinoco and Amazon river basins, which are largely accessible only by boat or airplane and house very little of the country's 45 million inhabitants, 75% of which live in cities. The difficulty in overland travel due to its geography has resulted in a nation of regions, often politically, culturally and geographically distant from the capital.

Added to the geographic diversity, the economic diversity needs to be considered as well. The per capital income average is \$9,200 (American dollars), but the figure is misleading as the nation's income distribution greatly favors the few extremely rich families. UNICEF'S 1993 study showed that the bottom 40% of households control only 13% of household income while the top 20% control 53%.¹⁰⁷ Thus, any discussion of education in Colombia should be conscious of the continued disparity of wealth between the rich and the poor, although they have made

¹⁰⁵ United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Colombia" <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html> Accessed: 25 January 2010.

¹⁰⁶ IDEAM (Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales), "Tabla 4. Temperatura Media" <http://www.ideam.gov.co/atlas/mclima.htm> Accessed: 25 January, 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Christine De Luca, Report: The Impact of Examination Systems on Curriculum Development: An International Study UNESCO, Paris, 1994, 16.

significant improvement in this area in recent years as demonstrated by Gini index of wealth disparity.¹⁰⁸ In 2008, Colombia had a Gini index of 53.8, ranking 14th worst in the world.¹⁰⁹ While this number is not good, it is down considerably from its 2006 index of 58.49. This shows the recent growth of the middle class, one of the causes for the expansion of bilingual schooling throughout the country.

Colombia's population is as diverse as its geography. It has the third highest population of African descent in the hemisphere behind Brazil and the United States, most of who live on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.¹¹⁰ The citizens of Bogotá are very Spanish in manner and appearance. Guajira is marked by its indigenous history, with many speaking Wayuú as well as Spanish. The diversity in background, wealth, and environment as well as their effects on communication and administration of Colombia's regions is important to note, and significantly undermine educational efforts.

The geographic diversity has marked Colombia most distinctly in the problems it presents in travel and communication between the distinct regions. A trip by land from Medellin (a distance of 152 miles) to Bogota takes anywhere from eight to ten hours depending on road conditions. The same trip via airplane takes 50 minutes.¹¹¹ This has to be taken into account

¹⁰⁸ Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Lorenz curve plots the cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients, starting with the poorest individual or household. The Gini index measures the area between the Lorenz curve and a hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as a percentage of the maximum area under the line. Thus a Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality. World Bank. "Gini Index" <http://search.worldbank.org/data?qterm=gini&language=EN&format=html> Accessed: 07 May 2010.

¹⁰⁹ World Sites Atlas. "Gini Index (distribution of family income)" <http://www.sitesatlas.com/Thematic-Maps/Gini-index-%28distribution-of-family-income%29.html> Accessed: 07 May 2010.

¹¹⁰ Aline Helg, *La educación de Colombia 1918-1957: Una historia social, economica, y politica* Bogotá: Fondo Editorial CEREC, 1987, 14.

¹¹¹ The trip between Salina, KS and Kansas City, KS is a similar distance (157 miles) and takes less than three hours by car.

when discussing the nation's education, as it poses significant impediments to effective administration, especially of the rural areas that are difficult to access.

History of Education in Colombia

“A nation is a product of its social, political and economic experiences. Colombia is a nation with a very tumultuous history, which has influenced the development of its educational system, especially in the rural areas.”¹¹² Colombia gained its independence from Spain in 1820. However, just 10 years after independence the nation of Gran Colombia dissolved into the three separate nations of Colombia (at the time called *La Republica de Nueva Grenada* which included Panama), Ecuador and Venezuela. In 1858, in order to stave off more possible division of the state, the government became a federal republic, giving greater autonomy to the states with the creation of The Grenadine Confederation (*La Confederación Granadina*).

¹¹² Mark E. Hanson, Educational Reform and Administrative Development: The Cases of Colombia and Venezuela Stanford, CA: Hoover Institutional Press, 1986, 21.



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When the conservative central government attempted to regain some of the power ceded to the eight sovereign states of the federation, a civil war broke out.¹¹⁴ The war ended four years later and in 1863 the United States of Colombia was created. There were several years of intermittent civil war that ended with the creation of the Republic of Colombia in 1886. The conservative and liberal elements continued their struggle, which broke into armed conflict

¹¹³ Agustín Codazzi, Manuel María Paz, and Felipe Pérez. *Atlas geográfico e histórico de la República de Colombia*, 1890, 4.

¹¹⁴ The eight sovereign states were the Sovereign State of: Santander, Bolívar, Boyacá, Cauca, Cundinamarca, Magdalena, and Tolima. Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, “Constitución para la Confederación Granadina de 1858” http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/01477398877125528632268/p0000001.htm#I_2. Accessed: 25 January, 2010.

several times, most notably in 1898 with the Thousand Days War, which was disastrous for a country recently hit by falling international coffee prices. With the 1948 assassination of the Liberal party candidate for president, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the conflict between the Liberals and Conservatives reignited with *La Violencia*, lasting until 1964.¹¹⁵ Since the 1960's until the present day, Colombia has been embroiled in the longest running armed conflict on the continent with many of the groups formed during or shortly after La Violencia, most notably the leftist ELN, FARC, Popular Liberation Army, and 19th of April Movement (M-19), and right wing governments and paramilitary groups formed to combat them.¹¹⁶ Thus, in the 190 years since Independence, the nation of Colombia under its various names has been in nearly constant conflict. Just between 1830, when the original Gran Colombia dissolved, until 1902, the end of the Thousand Days War, Colombia experienced nine civil wars and 14 regional wars.¹¹⁷ German Rama stated it well in his *Desarrollo y Educacion en America Latina y el Caribe*.

The long period of civil wars with its negative effect on the organization of the state and the establishment of fiscal budgets worthy of the name, the limited development of production and the maintenance of traditional patterns of social domination and class culture, impeded the realization of the proposals for

¹¹⁵ There are many different spans of time thought of as La Violencia, the most traditional begin in 1948 with the assassination of Liberal presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, and end with the return of civilian rule in 1957. Palacios characterizes it more broadly, believing it started with traditional sectarianism (1945-1948) and ending in 1964 following the decline of residual violence borne of the death squads thrusting themselves back into Colombian civic life. Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 2006, 135-138.

¹¹⁶ For example "Tirofijo," Pedro Antonio Marín Marín (AKA Manuel Marulanda Vélez), the head of the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) changed from the liberal party to the communist party during La Violencia. He remained head of the FARC until his death in 2008. Alfredo Molano, *The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History* NACLA Report on the Americas, Sept/Oct, 2000, 2.

¹¹⁷ Álvaro Tirado Mejía, *Aspectos sociales de las guerras civiles en Colombia* Medellín, Gobernación de Antioquia, 1996, 11.

educational expansion planned by some of the leading representatives of the movement for independence.¹¹⁸

Post-Independence Education

In an environment of perpetual war and insurgency, as well as the constantly shifting control by the Liberals and the Conservatives, developing a functional national education system was slow. In the centuries leading up to Independence, education was mostly a private affair with little by way of public education. Following Independence, Bolívar quickly sought central control of the country's educational system, which he viewed as a vehicle for modernization, nationalism and liberalism. Using his influence, an important early proponent of Colombian education, Francisco Paula de Santander, convinced Bolívar to place all of the nation's schools (which in 1819 were not many) under governmental control. The Vice President of Cundinamarca (Bogotá), Santander also decreed that all monasteries, convents and villages found schools if one did not previously exist. These schools would be managed by the state rather than the church, a marked difference from the colonial system.¹¹⁹

The state sought to set up many of the new schools in accordance with the teaching method of Joseph Lancaster, a British educator who promoted a monitorial method of instruction where the older students helped with the younger. The system had been used effectively in Caracas where a scarcity of qualified instructors hampered the broadening of education. The first Lancastrian school was founded near Cúcuta in 1821 by a Franciscan priest, Father Sebastian Mora. Santander brought Father Mora to Bogotá in order to open a school to train

¹¹⁸ German W. Rama, (ed.) Desarrollo y Educación en America Latina y el Caribe Buenos Aires: CEPAL- UNESCO, 1987, 151.

¹¹⁹ David Bushnell, The Santander Regime in Gran Colombia Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1954, 183, 190-192.

teachers in the Lancastrian method. In 1822 Santander's Decree 26 requested each province send students to learn the Lancastrian system and return to their communities to train teachers. However, the more conservative members of the central government were not in complete agreement concerning which direction to take their nascent educational initiatives. The local elites also resisted Lancastrian monitoring, believing it was the antithesis of good Catholic formation and deep learning, as well as the attempts to centralize teaching methods, taxation and curriculum development. In 1828, in order to avoid further political struggle, Bolívar suppressed the writings of some prominent English writers such as Jeremy Bentham, but the Lancastrian system remained.¹²⁰

In 1826, several events took place that changed the educational landscape. First, Santander published his 'Plan of Studies for Colombia', which required that secondary schools (*colegios*) and universities teach French and English. Second, the General Director of Public Instruction finally set up a central national administration for education. Third, a law was enacted mandating that education be free while restricting suffrage to the literate. Fourth, the first national university was formed, although it was more a combining of existing institutions. The year following these events saw the creation of "seven new *colegios*, 16 secondary schools, 52 Lancastrian monitorial schools, 434 literacy schools, and three normal schools."¹²¹ In accordance with the national administration for education, all social classes and ethnic groups were eligible for schooling, although in practice it was strictly limited to elite Creoles. Lastly,

¹²⁰ Much of the debate of the Lancastrian method was held within greater discussions of the role of Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism in Universities. German Marquinez Argote, "Benthamismo y Antibendiamismo" in German Marquinez Argote, *La Filosofía en Colombia: Historia de las ideas* Bogota, Editorial El Buho, 1988, 187 – 226.

¹²¹ "Normal" schools refers to teacher training schools. Richard Renner, *Education for a New Colombia*. Institute of International Studies, Washington, D.C.: 1971, 32.
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/3b/23/4a.pdf Accessed: 27 January, 2010, 35.

the 1827 foundation of the University of Cauca in Popoyán by Santander marked the first real efforts to create a quality university system within the country.¹²²

Bolívar died in 1830 as did Gran Colombia. Santander became president and continued his efforts to create a national education system. At the time the nation had three universities, 200 Lancastrian schools, 850 literacy schools, 26 post-elementary schools and two schools for girls, a substantial jump in just four years.¹²³

Combined with the inevitable post-war financial troubles, regional conflicts and liberal-conservative division, the post Independence leadership's goal of a uniform public school system largely failed. However, they greatly increased the number of schools in the country and undercut the autonomy of wealthy private schools by denying licenses to schools and teachers that failed to adhere to the national curriculum.¹²⁴

1850- 1967

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was a Swiss educational reformer whose early efforts were largely focused on improving the lot of the lower classes through industrial education.¹²⁵ Hoping to make some inroads in this area, following 1850 the government contracted a German mission to import a Pestalozzian educational system. In the ensuing years, the government founded several trade and industrial schools throughout the country.

Considered by many the father of public education in Colombia, Dámaso Zapata was the Superintendent of Public Education in Santander and later Director of Public Instruction in Cundinamarca. Following legislation in 1868 and 1870 Zapata created an efficient public school

¹²² Bushnell, 151.

¹²³ Renner, 32.

¹²⁴ Meri L. Clark, "Conflictos entre el Estado y las elites locales sobre la educación colombiana durante las décadas de 1820 y 1830." *Historia Crítica* 34: 32-61, July 2007, 32.

¹²⁵ Samuel Chester Parker, A Textbook in the History of Modern Elementary Education Boston, New York: Ginn and Company, c1912, 273.

system for the masses, demonstrating that when properly managed it was possible. Only a year after taking office (and with considerable help from the German mission) he had nearly quadrupled attendance in the department from 3,594 on his arrival to 16,489.¹²⁶

President Santos Acosta (1867-8) established what is now known as the National University of Colombia. The government also legislated the creation of the School of Arts and Crafts, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Natural Sciences, and Philosophy and Letters.¹²⁷

Attempting to resolve one issue of conflict between the liberals and the conservatives following the signing of the 1886 Constitution, the nascent Republic of Colombia signed the Concordat of 1887 with the Vatican.¹²⁸ The document stated that the Roman Catholic Church was the official church of Colombia while granting the Church legal status, which meant it had to pay taxes on all its property aside from churches and seminaries (including clerical residences). The Church also received broad powers and responsibility concerning the country's education.

In the universities, colleges, schools, and other centers of learning, education and public instruction will be organized and directed in conformity with the dogma and morals of the Catholic religion. Religious instruction will be obligatory in such centers, and the highest practices of the Catholic religion will be observed in them.

Consequently, in said centers of learning, the respective diocesan ordinaries, by themselves, or by special delegates, will exercise the right respecting religion and morals, of inspection and revision of textbooks. The Archbishop of Bogotá will designate the books that should serve as texts for religion and morals in the

¹²⁶ Ramón Zapata, Dámaso Zapata ó la Reforma Educacionista en Colombia Bogotá: El Gráfico Editores, 1961, 205.

¹²⁷ Renner, 32.

¹²⁸ It obviously did not resolve the conflict as the Thousand Days War broke out just two years later. Mark E. Hanson, Educational Reform and Administrative Development: The Cases of Colombia and Venezuela Stanford, CA: Hoover Institutional Press, 1986, 22.

universities; and to the end of assuring uniformity of instruction in the indicated matters, this prelate, in agreement with the other diocesan ordinaries, will select the texts for the other schools of official instruction. The government will prevent, in the conduct of literary and scientific courses, and in general, in all branches of instruction, the propagation of ideas which run contrary to Catholic dogma and to the respect and veneration due the church.

In the event that instruction in religion and morals, in spite of the orders and preventative measures of the government, does not conform to Catholic doctrine, the respective diocesan ordinary can restrain such professors or masters of faculty from the teaching of such subjects.¹²⁹

The 1887 Concordat loosened the educational restrictions on the various orders of the Church, completely subverting secular instruction. Many of the religious organizations promptly turned their attention on providing Catholic schooling for the masses.¹³⁰

Several of the established orders such as the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Jesuits quickly worked to expand their educational capabilities while several new orders used the opening to found schools in Colombia, including the Christian and Marist Brothers, the Daughters of Mary, the Silesian Fathers, the Sisters of the Presentation, and the Sisters of Vincent de Paul. The Church's efforts focused mainly on secondary and higher education for men, generally opposing secondary education for girls.¹³¹ Schools directed by those orders held great sway in Colombia's educational affairs well into the 20th century.¹³²

¹²⁹ Pat M. Holt, Colombia Today – and Tomorrow New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964, 21, 28, 175 and 175.

¹³⁰ Hanson, Mark E. Educational Reform and Administrative Development: The Cases of Colombia and Venezuela Stanford, CA: Hoover Institutional Press, 1986, 28.

¹³¹ Renner, 34.

¹³² Rafael Bernal Medina, "Educational Relations between the Church and the Government of Colombia" in George Z. F. Bereday and Joseph A. Lauwerys (eds.) The World Year Book of Education, 1966: The Church and State in Education New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966, 362.

Following the conclusion of the Thousand Days War in 1902 the country entered nearly 50 years of relative stability, which finally allowed the enforcing and expansion of governmental policy extending education. The Organic Law of Publication (Law 39) in 1903 asserted the responsibility of the country to provide for the education of its people by establishing a national system of education and inspection.¹³³ It also created divisions in public education between elementary, secondary, professional, industrial and artistic sectors. The same year the Ministry of Public Instruction was created and legislation was enacted making elementary education free, although not compulsory. Article 41 of the Colombian Constitution defines the State's role clearly.

Freedom of teaching is guaranteed. The state shall have, nevertheless, supreme inspection and vigilance of teaching institutions, both public and private, in order to secure a fulfillment of the social ends of general culture and the best intellectual, moral, and physical development of those who are education.¹³⁴

The state's retention of inspection rights became a running theme throughout the next several decades and all responsibility for post-elementary and industrial schools remained with the central government.

Conservative presidents Rafael Reyes (1904-09) and Carlos Restrepo (1910-14) introduced improved normal schools, increased school funding by taxing beef and liquor and revitalized the position of Inspector General of Education as they worked to gain greater central control of the nation's schools.

¹³³ Renner, 29.

¹³⁴ Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Estudio y Proyecto de Educación Media para Presentar al Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento Bogotá: Oficina de Planeamiento, Institutos Nacionales de Educación Media, September 1967, 1:24-25.

In spite of the reforms the nation's educational system continued to underperform. "In 1924, of a national population numbering 6.5 million, 90 percent of the people were estimated illiterate, and only 17,000 boys – no girls – were enrolled in secondary schools."¹³⁵ That same year, President Pedro Nel Ospina again turned to the Germans to help boost Colombia's educational efforts. Three German experts were brought with the intention of developing an educational program that could be enacted into law. They failed in their efforts due to resistance from the Church and others who opposed their secondary school changes and plan to reduce the number of Colombian Universities. They did succeed in the passage of Law 56 in 1927, which finally made elementary education compulsory, with the caveat that if a student lived more than 2.5 kilometers from a school the Law did not apply. The Decree 1790 extended Law 56 to include many more students in 1930 by requiring "hacienda owners to provide school facilities if they had more than 20 children of school age on their property."¹³⁶

The 1930's began a period of real achievement for Colombian education. Liberal president Olaya Herrera (1930-34) entreated a third German mission for help as the number of enrolled students still numbered less than 18,000.¹³⁷ The Government first created an improved national system of school inspection in order to confront continued concerns about quality. The Germans then spearheaded reforms creating secondary schools for girls and the enactment of Law 32 in 1936, which "ordered that no educational establishment, public or private, should deny education for reasons of birth or social or religious affiliation."¹³⁸

President Herrera's successor, fellow Liberal Alfonso López (1934 – 38, 1942 - 1945), reaffirmed the Roman Catholic Church as the religion of the nation but rescinded the educational

¹³⁵ Renner, 35.

¹³⁶ Renner, 36.

¹³⁷ W.O. Galbraith, Colombia: A General Survey London: Oxford University Press, 1966, 57.

¹³⁸ Renner, 36.

concessions given in the Concordat of 1887. These changes were more clearly delineated in 1942 when he negotiated a new agreement with the Vatican that officially ended the clerical control of education. The Constitution was later revised to make some of the changes more concrete, and while it stated that Catholicism was still the country's official religion, people were free to worship as they saw fit without fear of reprisal as long as they did not commit acts contrary to Christian morality or the laws of the state.¹³⁹

The first half of the twentieth century ended with the reduction of elementary education from six to four years and a law that required large businesses to offer education to their employees' children if there was not already a school within two kilometers.¹⁴⁰

The Violence that gripped the country until the early 1960's made educational reform difficult. The opposing factions frequently used schools as a way to indoctrinate the youth with their point of view, and teachers often found themselves dismissed when opposing parties held power. The two sides to the conflict finally agreed to leave the schooling system out of the fray and allow the teachers to teach.¹⁴¹ The country did manage to create an Office of Planning in 1956, which among other things formulated a series of five-year plans to more efficiently direct national efforts and play a large role in the future of Colombia's education.¹⁴²

Beginning in 1960 the government committed to helping the departments meet the educational costs of elementary schools. Law III of that year made the national government responsible for paying all public school teachers' salaries, although the Law would not take effect until the beginning of 1965. In 1961 the national government also assumed responsibility

¹³⁹ Holt, 176.

¹⁴⁰ Renner, 36.

¹⁴¹ Hanson, 37.

¹⁴² In 1960 it became the Office of Planning, Coordination and Evaluation. Alejandro Bernal Escobar, La Educación en Colombia Bogotá: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, 1965, 85.

from the departments for the construction of new schools.¹⁴³ These two initiatives helped make education between the rural and urban areas more equitable in contrast to the previous organization where the rich states/areas had a much larger budget to dedicate to education. The years leading up to 1968 saw several educational efforts both within the country and from outside international agencies frustrated by the lack of administrative efficiency in the country. The government realized that until the administrative capabilities were improved, all efforts at change would struggle to be effective.

School enrollment increased dramatically following World War II as the population shifted to the urban areas and the type of employment available to the migrants changed. In the ten years between 1955 and 1965 the number of elementary school students increased by a million students. Five years later another million had joined the rolls. The same period, between 1955 and 1970 saw nearly a million more students enrolled in high school as well. While an increased number of students is certainly an improvement, “[t]he rapid expansion of the school system was not the result of a planned government program. Rather it was necessitated by population growth, urbanization, and the increased unwillingness of many to endure the consequences of illiteracy.”

Table 3.1: Colombia’s Elementary School Enrollment, 1935 – 1980 (in percent)¹⁴⁴

Year	Total Enrollment	Public Schools	Private Schools	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
1935	(556,379)	93.31	6.69	49.40	50.60
1945	(678,386)	94.71	5.29	48.37	51.63
1955	(1,235,484)	85.19	14.81	57.18	42.82
1965	(2,274,014)	86.01	13.99	64.28	35.72
1970	(3,286,052)	86.57	13.43	67.40	32.60
1975	(3,911,244)	84.85	15.15	65.84	34.16
1977	(4,160,527)	85.07	14.93	65.48	34.52
1980	(4,173,200)	85.02	14.97	65.42	34.58

¹⁴³ Renner, 43, 48.

¹⁴⁴ Hanson, 32.

Table 3.2: Colombia's Secondary School Enrollment, 1935 – 1980 (in percent)¹⁴⁵

Year	Total Enrollment	Public Schools	Private Schools
1935	(46,670)	46.46	53.54
1945	(67,877)	59.29	40.71
1955	(131,598)	41.76	58.24
1965	(420,130)	45.88	54.12
1970	(750,055)	50.17	49.83
1975	(1,3170,567)	51.80	48.20
1977	(1,616,117)	54.22	45.78
1980	(1,824,000)	55.40	44.50

Until the 1970s, despite all their efforts to transform it, Colombia's education, was "basically out of control. The administrative infrastructure, especially at the state level, contributed to the inefficiency of the system."¹⁴⁶ Many of the attempted reforms had not been successfully implemented due to a number of reasons. The Liberals and the Conservatives exchanged power over the years, which undermined consistent policy development as each sought to reverse the other's initiatives. Also, the fluctuation between a central education system and allowing each department to control their region's schooling hindered equitable development. Without effective national administration, the departments often chose to ignore national policy changes when it was convenient to do so.

1968-Present

1968 was a seminal year for Colombian education as the government led by president Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-70) made a series of reforms aimed at centralizing educational policy while decentralizing administration. Mark E. Hanson in his *Educational Reform and Administrative Development: The Case of Colombia and Venezuela* defined reform as "A

¹⁴⁵ Hanson, 33

¹⁴⁶ Hanson, 38.

qualitative increase in the ability of organization to accomplish their goals more efficiently.”¹⁴⁷

This is exactly what Colombia hoped to achieve with Decree 3157 of 1968, a more efficient implementation of their educational goals.

However, the challenges faced by the government were many. Through several decades of effort few gains had been made and the country’s educational system was mired in a slow process of “shifting from the still predominant classic, elitist oriented, sharply peaking educational pyramid, toward a broader, technically oriented system more responsive to the development needs of the country and to the civic, economic and social needs of its citizens.”¹⁴⁸

On top of that was the influx of new students and the nation’s persistent illiteracy. According to the literacy census of 1964, the illiteracy rate of those aged fifteen years and over was 27.1 percent.¹⁴⁹ In 1970 the minister of education reported that out of every 100 students only 3.7% of them could be expected to graduate from high school.¹⁵⁰

Enrollment rose throughout the country, but many of the school age children still were not attending school. In 1970, more than 25% of the nation’s elementary age (6-12) population was not in school. More than 75% of those of secondary school age were not in school. The efforts made by the government were working however, as both of those numbers dropped by 1977. Table 3.4 shows constant improvement in the percentage of the population who report ‘no school’ or ‘elementary school’ as their highest attained level while those reporting that they attended (not graduated) some high school or tertiary school rose steadily over time.

Table 3.3: Comparison of Elementary Education and Secondary Education in Colombia, 1970

¹⁴⁷ Hanson, 2.

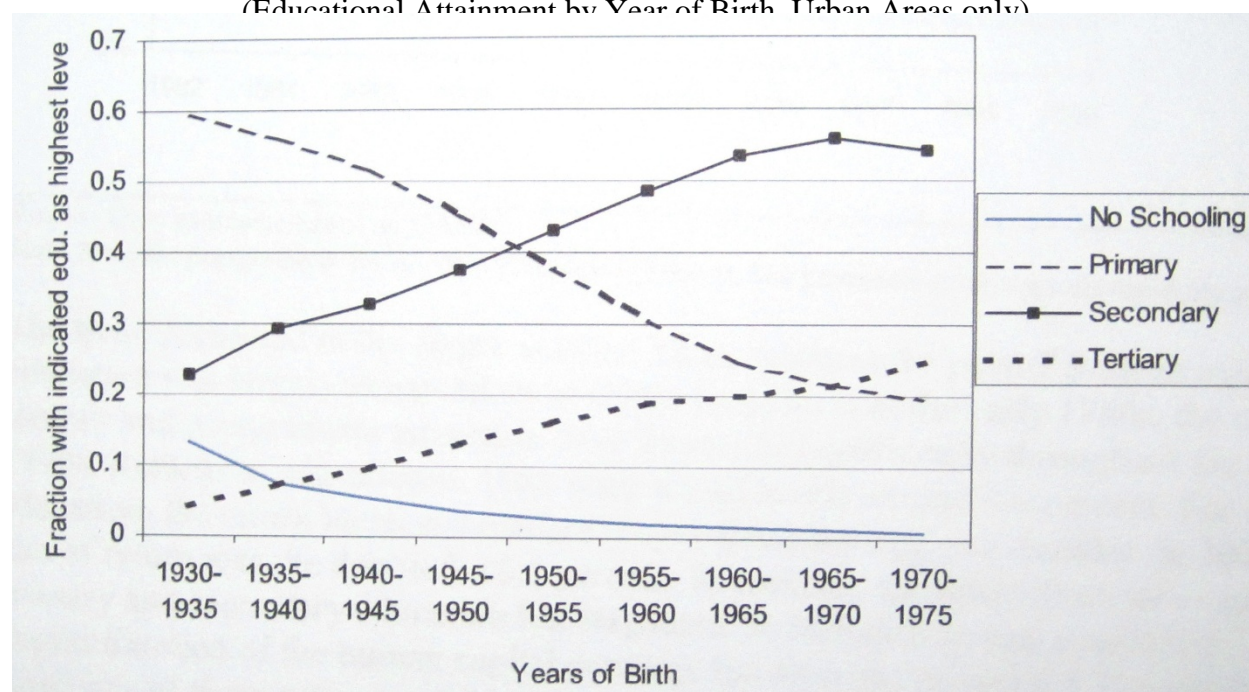
¹⁴⁸ U.S. Agency for International Development, “Colombia: Education Sector Assessment” Colombia: USAID, May 1973, 1.

¹⁴⁹ Ministerio de Educación Nacional. La educación en Colombia, 1960 – 1968: Diagnóstico. Bogotá: Imprenta del Ministerio de Educación Nacional, n.d., 175.

¹⁵⁰ Rodolfo Low-Maus, Compendium of the Colombian Educational System Bogotá: Editorial Andes, 1971, 114.

Year	Number in Age-group	Number Enrolled	Number Not Enrolled	Percentage in School	Percentage Not in School
and 1977. ¹⁵¹					
<u>Elementary School (ages 6-12)</u>					
1970	4,384,809	3,286,052	1,108,757	74.77	25.23
1977	5,404,046	4,160,527	1,243,519	76.99	23.01
<u>Secondary School (Ages 13-18)</u>					
1970	3,006,715	750,055	2,256,660	24.95	75.05
1977	4,068,279	1,616,111	2,452,168	39.72	60.28

Table 3.4: Significant Improvements in Human Capital over the Last 70 years
(Educational Attainment by Year of Birth - Urban Areas only)



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The main goal of the reforms was to regain control from the departments in regards to educational policy. In order to do this Decree 3157 created a program called Regional Educational Funds (FER or *Fondos Educativos Regionales*). However, due to the way it was created it could not violate the states' rights, which were clearly stated in the Constitution, so it had to coax the states to give up their autonomy voluntarily. FER succeeded in getting all of the

¹⁵¹ Hanson, 34.

¹⁵² Andreas Blom and Thomas Hansen, Economic Perspectives of Tertiary Education: The Case of Colombia. LCSHD Paper Series No. 75 World Bank, Human Development Department (LCSHD), Washington D.C.: 2002, 2

states' governors to agree to the reforms by implying that the money that paid the states' teachers would be withheld were they to refuse.¹⁵³

The reforms required the departments to:

1. Annually increase state appropriations for education.
2. Hire only teachers who met the qualifications established by the ministry.
3. Replace non-qualified teachers.
4. Create supervisor positions at a ratio of 1 per 200 teachers.
5. Reorganize the state education offices to ministry recommendations.
6. Follow ministry wage scale and promotion policy.
7. Permit ministry supervision of state budget expenditures for education.
8. Demonstrate budget feasibility for new teacher hires.
9. Accept the presence of a ministry official, with supervisory powers.

The contract also delegated administration of the elementary schools to the departments, and created a FER fund, a special account where all education money would be deposited and thus monitored. Monitoring the FER fund was the primary job of the ministry official in each department.¹⁵⁴ The FER did not apply to private schools, as they were financed privately, and therefore not included in the reforms.

The five years following the reforms were ones of significant turmoil as the ministry attempted to exercise its rediscovered power over education and the departments sought to retain what they could. Real changes from the FER reforms began to take place by 1973 and became institutionalized by 1980. The program had succeeded in centralizing control over educational policy, taken control of state education budgets, and established that teachers were paid on time.¹⁵⁵ FER was not the only major educational development of 1968, however.

Also in 1968 the government decreed a reorganization of the National University Fund into the *Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación* (Superior Colombian Institute

¹⁵³ Hanson, 74.

¹⁵⁴ Hanson, 75.

¹⁵⁵ Beatriz Azuero de Muñoz, Fondos Educativos Regionales: Normas aplicables Bogotá: Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1981, 52.

for the Development of Higher Education or ICFES). The ICFES today writes and administers the nationwide high school exit exam that is used to both rank schools on a national level and as a way to determine students' university aptitude, much like the SAT or ACT in the United States. In 1957 rectors from 23 universities got together to create the Colombian Association of Universities in order to improve higher education. The following year the Association began coordinating its efforts with the National University Fund. The universities bonded together to create a certification of the degrees being offered across the country. By 1970, 34 universities were part of the Association and all institutions not included were permitted to call themselves "universities" but were not allowed to confer university diplomas. The 1968 reorganization that created the ICFES also separated it from the Colombian Association of Universities and placed it more under the influence of the Ministry of Education.¹⁵⁶ The ICFES now creates and administers the school exit exam taken by all students graduating high school and used extensively to rank both the students and their schools.

Nineteen seventy saw an enormous amount of proposed changes, all of which required money. Included in the reforms were changes to the country's financial structure in order to pay for the educational improvements. These reforms were also designed to distribute education finances more equitably between the departments. The most important of these reforms was the Situado Fiscal de Educación y Salud (an educational tax allowance). The law, passed in 1971 but not put in effect until 1973, stated that each year an increasing percentage of the nation's ordinary income should be distributed to the states to support elementary education. Thus in

¹⁵⁶ Renner, 111-3.

1973, 13% percent of the nation's income (14% in 1974, 15% in 1975, etc.) would be put towards education.¹⁵⁷

In 1974, in response to rural students' frequent grade repetition, persistent disparity between urban and rural test scores and the continued failure of the nation's rural students to learn to read and understand what they read, the Colombian Ministry of Education introduced the New School (*Escuela Nueva*). Designed to correct the problem, the New School has shown much promise in developing an active education with concrete results, and continues to be used today to educate rural areas with limited resources.¹⁵⁸

Elementary education had been the responsibility of the national government since 1960, but not until 1975 did they take nationalize secondary education as well. Unlike the elementary efforts, the national government planned to not only pay teacher salaries but also create a standardized system concerning the salaries and benefits, terminate the unauthorized hiring of teachers and take control of school construction to eliminate the uncoordinated efforts of independent construction. All of this was designed to give secondary education the push that elementary education had received with the Situado Fiscal.

The rapid growth of the Ministry of Education led to typical bureaucratic overlap and waste, and consequently it underwent a facelift in 1976. Many of the new administrative units were integrated and their roles and responsibilities clearly defined. The position of Director General of In Service Training, Curriculum Development and Instructional Materials was created. Most students enrolled in secondary school were in an academic program, engineering, or medicine, with only 6 and 4% in industrial or agricultural programs, respectively. To address

¹⁵⁷ Ordinary income is current national revenues less mandated transfers to the states and municipalities. Hanson, 95, 226.

¹⁵⁸ Ernesto Schiefelbein, Redefining Basic Education for Latin America: Lessons to be Learned from the Colombian Escuela Nueva UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, 1992, 45, 46.

this problem the Ministry created two-year post-secondary intermediate career programs for students who do not attend a traditional university, including topics such as bookkeeping, dental hygiene, and tourism. Vocational training centers were also established in 23 low-income areas in major cities throughout the country.¹⁵⁹

It was around this time that SENA (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje*) began to truly flourish, although it was founded in 1963. Funded by a payroll tax, it was designed as both vocational and practical three-year training, with some of that time in placed internships. The program is flexible in regards to the training needs of the country and the specific region they work in, as determined by surveys it employs, and attempts to work in the areas of greatest need. Colombia's SENA program is one of the most successful vocational programs in Latin America and continues to serve every department in the country with steadily increasing enrollment until the present day.¹⁶⁰

While the 1970's were about the reforms and clarification of the responsibilities of the central government and departmental governments, the 1980's and 90's saw an expansion of that debate to the municipal level. In the second half of the 1980s the central government tried to place more of the responsibility in the hands of the municipalities. The thought at the time was that the more local the administration, the better local agents would serve the needs of their communities.¹⁶¹

The problem was that the central government contradicted itself with its legislation. After spending five years trying to delegate more responsibility to the municipal level, the 1991 Constitution emphasized the role of the departments. Then just two years later, Law 60 in 1993

¹⁵⁹ Hanson, 133.

¹⁶⁰ Renner, 103-6.

¹⁶¹ Patricia Vanegas, "The Northern Influence and Colombian Education Reform of the 1990's" in Stephen J. Ball, Gustavo Fischman and Silvina Gvirtz, Crises and Hope: The Educational Hopscotch of Latin America NY: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003.

enhanced the role of the municipalities again. So by 1994, teachers were divided by who signed their paychecks, the central government, the departments, or the municipal government.¹⁶² Since that time, the government has worked more consistently to involve and finance the municipal level.

The primary educational goal of the 1991 Constitution was to offer universal coverage in basic education (nine grades) to Colombia’s population. The school system was stratified into one year of pre-school (called *transición*), five years of primary school, four years of secondary school, and two years of “medium school.” It also set the minimum legal age when a student could drop out of school at 15.¹⁶³

The Constitution also sought to clarify the responsibilities in education administration and clearly outline who was in charge of what while following the pattern of decentralization. It did this somewhat as you can see in Table 3.5 although it failed to solve one major problem, the governmental entities responsible for providing administrative functions often did not have the capability or funding to do so, a vestige of the 1968 reforms. The table shows that the departments were responsible for planning educational development (teaching services), but there was no allocation of funds to do this properly.¹⁶⁴

Table 3.5: Distribution of Educational Functions According to the 1991 Constitution, Laws 60 of 1993, and 115 of 1994.

Nation	To establish technical, curricular, and pedagogical norms to be used by the territorial entities for orientation.
Department	To plan, administer, and coordinate teaching services, and to distribute them to municipalities. To assume the functions of technical development at pilot centers. To prepare the curriculum for teachers. To raise funds to maintain the infrastructure and educational investments.

¹⁶² George J. Borjas, and Olga Lucía Acosta, “Educational Reform in Colombia” in Alberto Alesina, Institutional Reforms: The Case of Colombia Cambridge: M.I.T., 2005, 245.

¹⁶³ John Wells, “Trying to Meet the Demands of English in a Global Market: A Critical Discussion of the National Bilingual Programme in Colombia.” International Education Studies <http://journal.ccsenet.org/index.php/ies/article/viewFile/939/919K> Accessed: 30 January 2010.

¹⁶⁴ Borjas, 246.

Municipalities To administer the pre-school, primary, middle-school, and secondary services as delegated by the department. To make the necessary investments in infrastructure and establishments. To inspect and supervise educational services.

Many people consider the Constitution a failure because of its rigidity and vagueness concerning issues it was supposed to resolve, such as administration, but the law holding parents responsible if their kids left school was clearly working. In 1977 nearly 25% of elementary age students and 60% of secondary students were not enrolled in school. By 1998, only 10% of students (5-16 year old) were not enrolled in school, although this number was higher for poor students than students from medium and high socioeconomic backgrounds.¹⁶⁵ Government spending had also increased since the 1970s, as had decentralization of funding, although not to a large degree.

Table 3.6: Public expenditures on education as a percent of GCP¹⁶⁶

Year	Central Government	Local Government	Total
Average, 1970's	1.1	2.0	3.1
Average, 1980's	0.9	2.5	3.4
Average, 1990's	1.3	2.6	3.8

Source: Misión Social DNP, based on formulary F-400 of the DANE

The General Education Law (*Ley General de la Educación*) of 1994 demonstrated Colombia's desire to have a more bilingual populace, stating that students in Primary and Secondary school must acquire reading and conversation skills in a foreign language.¹⁶⁷ They did not specify the foreign language, although the tendency was towards English. The level of English expected was initially very low, but that would change in 2005.

¹⁶⁵ Children of lower socioeconomic class in 1998 had an 85% enrollment rate, while middle and high averaged 93 and 94% respectively. Borjas, 256, 275.

¹⁶⁶ Borjas, 247.

¹⁶⁷ The Law was composed of Law 107 of 1994, Law 115 of 1994, Decree 1857 of 1994, Decree 1860 of 1994, Decree 2886 of 1994 and Law 30 of 1992. Wells, 82.

In 2005 the Ministry of Education unveiled the National Bilingual Program (NBP), whose first phase (2005-2010) aimed to provide a basic to good knowledge of English as a second language to all public school students, with proficiency dependent on their grade level. The second phase of implementation (2010-2019) seeks “to develop bilingualism in the country.”¹⁶⁸ The government already mandated second language instruction in public schools; this specified that the second language must be English.

The problems with the Program are many. One main area of concern is the failure to provide a way to verify if students were reaching these vague goals. Also, the tests used are severely flawed in gauging functional English, and many of the teachers are not qualified either in experience or language proficiency. Lastly, government also did not differentiate between elite bilingualism and the bilingualism spoken by many of the indigenous groups in the country. Does this mean that they now had to speak their native tongue, Spanish and English? Regardless of these flaws, the Program did bring English farther to the front of the national consciousness in a country where being bilingual means being upwardly mobile.

While much of this history seems to have little to do with private schools, or “bilingual” schools, the confusion and constant shifting of policy in the public sector is relevant because it demonstrates the difficulty the government had in providing education to the nation. This left very little time to concern themselves with the Colombia’s private schools, and even less so the very best of them. Ninety percent of the government’s time in regards to private schools was employed inspecting new ones, with almost all of the remaining time spent policing false advertising by the less expensive ones trying to attract more students. As the government allocated more and more responsibility to the municipalities, a laissez-faire attitude towards private schools became the norm. In four years working in a private school, the only mention of

¹⁶⁸ Wells, 77.

the Ministry of Education came when paper work was due, such as subject plans, although they were viewed by many as busy work and not taken particularly seriously in comparison to the interschool departmental subject planning.

Chapter Three: American Accreditation

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the process, benefits and risks of seeking American accreditation as it relates to prestigious bilingual schools on Colombia's Atlantic Coast. Schools have many options when seeking some sort of international recognition. Perhaps the oldest is seeking accreditation by agencies from the nation with which the school identifies. There is a history of American/British/French schools abroad that adhere to the educational tenets of those nations and exist as islands of those nations inside the borders of another. The United States has never had a federal system of monitoring school quality. In this void accrediting agencies developed to monitor the quality of institutions. In the 20th Century as society grew more mobile, the need for monitoring American school quality abroad became more pressing. In Latin America the agency that filled this role was the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).¹⁶⁹ SACS moved into Colombia in 1960 and began accrediting traditional American schools.

Times have changed since then, and SACS has changed with them. The accreditation process is more conscious of the differences in schooling in Colombia as well as the differences in resources in these 'elite' private schools. Schools are now allowed to teach half of the curriculum in Spanish provided they can prove graduating students can use English cognitively and fluently.

There are both risks and rewards in seeking accreditation. The rewards involve becoming part of a global community of educators, offering a US diploma upon graduation and demonstrating evidence of educational excellence. The risks involve: costs, losing control of the

¹⁶⁹ SACS merged with the North Central Association in 2006 and became part of AdvancED Worldwide. For the sake of continuity in relating the past with the present, it will be referred to as SACS throughout the paper.

school's culture and the possible perception that accreditation in Latin America is not as rigorous, and therefore less useful for school improvement, than in the United States.

History of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Most nations have a national education system, controlled by the federal government, but the United States does not. “Historically control of American education has followed the pattern of American government. Control has been decentralized with most powers vested in state and local bodies and with relatively little direct control by the federal government.”¹⁷⁰ The Department of Education does not set minimum standards that schools have to adhere to in order to validate their diplomas. Due to the lack of federal oversight and regulation of the public education system in the United States, regional accrediting agencies moved to standardize schools and define minimum standards. There are currently five agencies, although there were more in the past, the first of which, the New England Association of Colleges and Schools (NEACS), was founded in 1884. The North Central Association and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools were next, with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and North Western Association coming into existence in the first half of the 20th century when the population of the United States moved west.¹⁷¹

In 1894 the Universities of Chicago, Michigan, and Wisconsin formed the North Central Association (NCA) after being asked by a group of high school principals in Michigan to help improve the level of education in secondary schools in the area. The following year Vanderbilt University founded the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) with other

¹⁷⁰ George F. Zook, and M.E. Haggarty, Principles of Accrediting Higher Institutions, v. 1, Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1936, p. 9.

¹⁷¹ WASC – 1960, Northwest – 1917. Fox, Burton, “The Question of Accreditation Overseas: A Comparative Study of Accredited and Non-Accredited Schools in Latin America.” Unpublished dissertation, University of Alabama, 1969.

important universities in the region, including Trinity College (now Duke University), University of North Carolina, University of Mississippi, the University of the South, and Washington and Lee University, with the purpose of creating an organization that “would work towards closer relations between the colleges and secondary schools” in the south.¹⁷²

At the time of founding, the NCA was more focused on bettering secondary schools while SACS was focused on bettering southern colleges. According to SACS first secretary, Vanderbilt chancellor J.H. Kirkland, “[o]ur first effort was merely to bring together a small group of colleges willing to help each other and to stand together on a moderate platform of honest work and unfaltering publicity.”¹⁷³ Institutions of inferior quality could label themselves a college or university and the SACS member schools wanted to set themselves apart, united under the banner of quality: “accreditation.” Also, school admissions officers had little idea of the quality of education at the various high schools and preparatory schools nor how to handle the transferring of credit from other colleges of often questionable quality.¹⁷⁴

Coming out of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools first meeting in November, 1895 were three clearly stated purposes:

1. Organizing southern schools and colleges for co-operation and mutual assistance.
2. Elevating standards of scholarship and effecting uniformity of entrance requirements.
3. Developing preparatory schools and separating their work from the colleges.¹⁷⁵

It is important to note a major difference in the powers of these accrediting agencies and a federal government system that performs this same function of setting and enforcing minimum

¹⁷² Wiley, 40.

¹⁷³ Wiley, 40.

¹⁷⁴ Lloyd E. Blanch, Accreditation of Higher Education, Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1959, p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Wiley, 40

standards. Subjecting yourself to review by one of these accrediting agencies was completely voluntary and suggested changes were not enforceable. “Decisions of the Association of questions not pertaining to its organization shall always be considered advisory and not mandatory.”¹⁷⁶ They state very clearly on the organization’s website, “Accreditation is a nongovernmental and voluntary process of evaluation concerned with improving educational quality and assuring the public that member institutions meet established standards.”¹⁷⁷

The original benefit of gaining SACS accreditation was for entrance into institutions of higher learning. If your school had voluntarily gone through the process of accreditation it showed local colleges and universities that it maintained a standardized level of instruction, which aided graduating students in their application process. Later, the Southern Association began taking adherence to its requirements more seriously, checking to see if schools were to up to par. The only real power the Associations had was to omit your name from their list of member institutions. If a school failed to meet expectations, they received an asterisk on the published list indicating a probationary status.¹⁷⁸

In 1917 this became more explicitly stated as SACS set up a Commission of Institutions of Higher Education whose stated purposes were:

1. Prepare standards to be met by members and prospective members.
2. Make necessary inspections.
3. Recommend dismissal of institutions not meeting the standards.

¹⁷⁶ Wiley, 40.

¹⁷⁷ AdvancED Worldwide, “About Us” http://www.advanc-ed.org/about_us/ Accessed: 12 August 2009.

¹⁷⁸ H. M. Gage, “High School and College Accrediting Agencies” Southern Association Proceedings Vol: 40, 1935, 337.

4. List the institutions that met standards in a publication.¹⁷⁹

They now had means to remove schools that were not living up to standards, as well as a mandate to inspect.

One of SACS problems was what to do with special schools that could not meet standards, such as junior colleges or Negro colleges. They solved this problem by allowing such schools to gain “accreditation” while withholding “membership status” to indicate the difference from normal accreditation. “[T]he result was an accommodative fiction which supported the ‘separate but equal’ ideology without having to lower the standards of the central body.¹⁸⁰ This calls into question how standardized the level of education really was, and whether the legacy of holding different types of schools to different standards still holds, specifically in regard to those located outside of the United States.

For much of their shared history the Northern Association led the way concerning improvements and attempts to modernize accreditation standards.¹⁸¹ Once most institutions had reached minimum standards, the Associations began to work on raising institutions above and beyond the minimum standards. Also, the agencies began to be more flexible in their assessments of member schools. Both moved away from specific quantitative standards toward more qualitative evaluation, viewing schools in the context of their individual purposes, a direction it continues toward even today, as evidenced by allowing Spanish language teams to evaluate in Latin America, something that wouldn’t have happened even as recently as 1970.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Wiley, 41.

¹⁸⁰ Wiley, 42.

¹⁸¹ Wiley, 44-46.

¹⁸² Rob Leveille. Vice President of International Affairs, AdvancED. Telephone interview with author. 3 August 2009.

The following chart demonstrates that while SACS grew not only in total number of schools in the southern region that were accredited, but also the percentage of the total, until 1959, when nearly 90% of all schools chose to participate in SACS accreditation.

Table 4.1: Percent of Southern U.S. Institutions Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools by Decade¹⁸³

Decade	Percent of Total	Number of Institutions
0 (1905)	18.0%	50
1 (1915)	31.1%	72
2 (1924)	28.3%	156
3 (1933)	55.5%	177
4 (1939)	67.0%	203
5 (1950)	74.8%	204
6 (1959)	88.2%	235

*This table indicates both how the total number of institutions rose rapidly as well as the percentage that chose to seek SACS accreditation rose both in number and in percentage, reaching almost ninety percent of the institutions in the region.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Moves into Latin America

In 1929 a school located in the Canal Zone in Panama sought and received accreditation from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (MSACSS). Although this was technically American territory and therefore not the first accredited school in Latin America, it brought the idea of accrediting schools outside the United States to the forefront. The following year, SACS became the first American association to accredit an international school, the American School Foundation of Mexico City, covering grades 7-12 with 13 teachers

¹⁸³ Wiley, 50.

and 315 students.¹⁸⁴ The school is still accredited today. There was a nine-year lull but in 1939 the American High School in Buenos Aires, Argentina and the Lago Community High School in Aruba both received SACS approval.¹⁸⁵

With the interruption of World War II, there were few new schools to be accredited until after 1948 when both the North Central and Southern Associations began to expand internationally. The various accrediting associations agreed to an informal division of the globe concerning who would cover which areas. The North Central Association was given the Department of Defense (DoD) schools all over the globe, The Southern Association was given the Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle States Association was given the rest of the world. This agreement was later formalized in a meeting in Detroit in 1961. In the late 1960's the Western Association, which served California, Hawaii, and Guam sought and was given permission to accredit schools in the "Far East."¹⁸⁶ Other regional Associations have since followed suit. While the agreement no longer formally stands, the regional agencies still largely hold to the originally agreed upon spheres of influence.¹⁸⁷

A resolution passed by SACS on November 30th, 1960 demonstrates their commitment to accreditation of American schools in Latin America. "All members of the Southern Association are therefore urged to:

1. Plan programs to assist students from these countries who come to the United States in personal and educational adjustments.

¹⁸⁴ Fox, Burton. The Question of Accreditation Overseas: A Comparative Study of Accredited and Non-Accredited Schools in Latin America. Unpublished dissertation, University of Alabama, 1969, 19.

¹⁸⁵ Fox, 23.

¹⁸⁶ Fox, 31.

¹⁸⁷ Rob Leveillee. Vice President of International Affairs, AdvancED. Telephone interview with author. 3 August 2009.

2. Give attention in the curriculum to developing a knowledge and appreciation of Latin America and ability to speak its languages.
3. Make staff time available to aid in exchange of pupils, staff members or consultative services as specific plans may be developed.
4. Participate in joint meetings that may be arranged between educators from Latin America and the United States.
5. Develop a method of recognizing schools in Latin America that do not meet Southern Association standards but wish to participate in activities involving educators of the United States and Latin America.”¹⁸⁸

During the presidency of John F. Kennedy two teams of US educators travelled to Europe, Africa and Asia to investigate American schools abroad. In their report they wrote that in order to offer an equal education to the one offered by public schools within the United States they needed financial assistance. The result was the creation of the Office of Overseas Schools in 1964, working under the auspices of the US State Department.¹⁸⁹ Lyndon B. Johnson, who assumed the presidency in 1963, was a self-professed “Education President” and a former teacher and principal in his native state of Texas. A graduate of Southwest Texas State Teachers' College (now Texas State University-San Marcos), Johnson spent time teaching in three schools, including at Welhausen School, a Mexican-American school in Cotulla, a small town in southern Texas.¹⁹⁰ As a teacher in Texas he served a largely poor Hispanic student body, which would help shape his views about the purpose and importance of education and put him in early contact

¹⁸⁸ Fox, 26 - 27.

¹⁸⁹ Gilbert C. Brown, “International Education or International Schools: Would I Know Them If I Saw Them?” *Journal of the Association for the Advancement of International Education* Vol. 34: 104, 2007, 16.

¹⁹⁰ Lyndon B. Johnson Library Archives Staff, “President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Biography” http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/biographys.hom/lbj_bio.asp Accessed: 31 July 2009.

with SACS.¹⁹¹ Recognizing the possibility of using international American schools as ambassadors in the international community, he provided government funding through his “Showcases of Excellence” program.¹⁹² Designed to raise the level of education at these schools and “Showcase” American excellence in education, the program offered stimulus money in small grants of a few thousand dollars in particular areas to get the schools up to standard. Although never well funded, the program got all the interested parties on the same page and generated considerable enthusiasm in the U.S. government, the accrediting associations and their affiliated universities, and the overseas schools. According to Dr. Burton Fox, principal at one such school located in Barranquilla, Colombia who began to seek accreditation in 1964:

you have enthusiasm, a combination of enthusiasm in the overseas school, in the Office of Overseas Schools, US State Department, and at some given university, in this case it was the University of Alabama, and the accreditation association, in those days, at that time, you wouldn't have found that enthusiasm at the New England Colleges and Schools, at Mid Atlantic, Western. They did a little bit around the world, but they didn't have that thrust that SACS had.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Micheal E. Melody, “Lyndon Johnson and the Welhausen School: Segue to the Presidency” Small School Forum, Vol: 6:2, n.d.: 20-22.

¹⁹² Brown, 16.

¹⁹³ Burton Fox. Ex-Director, current board member, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview by author held in Barranquilla, Colombia, 18 June 2009.



Lyndon B. Johnson with his students at the Welhausen School. Source: Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.¹⁹⁴

SACS Moves into Colombia

The 1960s were marked by a lot of enthusiasm abroad and in the United States to accredit schools in Latin America. This push into the region coincided with the end of *La Violencia* in Colombia.¹⁹⁵ The first SACS school in Colombia, Colegio Nueva Grenada in Bogota, was accredited in 1961.¹⁹⁶ By 1967 Colombia, with five, had the second highest number of

¹⁹⁴ Lyndon B. Johnson with his students at the Welhausen School from the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, <http://www.presidentialtimeline.org/html/record.php?id=652> Date: 1928 Accessed: 5 July 2009.

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Control Number: 28-13-4

¹⁹⁵ As previously mentioned, scholars place the end of *La Violencia* somewhere between 1958 and 1964 depending on their interpretations. Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002*, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press) 2006, 135-138.

¹⁹⁶ AdvancED Worldwide, "School locator." <http://oracle.advanced.org/reporting/Reports/LocatorReport.aspx?AssociationID=2&TaxonomyID=2&DistrictID=&SchoolName=&City=&GovernanceID=&SchoolTypeID=&State=&Country=CO&CharterTypeID=> Accessed: 12 August 2009.

accredited schools in Latin America.¹⁹⁷ Two of those schools were Colegio Karl C. Parrish (KCP) in Barranquilla and Colegio Jorge Washington in Cartagena (COJOWA), the two largest cities on the northern Caribbean coast.

A lot has changed since COJOWA and Parrish were accredited in the 1960's. There are now 114 SACS/CASI schools in Latin America, 11 of which are Colombian, having added one in 1985, two in 90's and three since 2000, including one last year, the Altamira International School, discussed later.¹⁹⁸ Membership requirements have also changed. According to Rob Leveillee, Vice President of International Services for SACS: "I can tell you that 15 years ago, most schools in Latin America, to be eligible, you had to be a displaced American school. You had to have state-side certified educators. We have undergone a significant transformation. We have evolved and decided that national schools of quality should be allowed to seek accrediting."

Another area that has changed is that SACS used to only accredit schools that taught their whole curriculum in English. Now many schools teach on a 50/50 ratio but must demonstrate that their students "can speak English cognitively and fluently," using some standardized measurement device, such as the SAT, TOEFL, or Michigan exams. This began changing two or three years ago, again according to Dr. Leveillee. "Twenty years ago 85% or more of the students were from the United States with 15% or less, local national children. Now what you find is that in the vast majority is the flip, 75%, 80% are host national children. As the schools evolved, more and more and more, this notion on such a heavy reliance on English didn't become a reasonable expectation." He went on to discuss the ideal of producing bilingual

¹⁹⁷ First was Venezuela, with seven accredited schools, three of which had been accredited in 1966. Fox, Burton, 137-140.

¹⁹⁸ Colombia still has the second most SACS schools in Latin America, now second to Brazil which has 15. AdvancED Worldwide, "School locator." <http://oracle.advanced.org/reporting/Locator.aspx?AssociationID=2&TaxonomyID=21> Accessed: 22 July 2009.

students that top US schools have always had and the opportunity to make it a reality in these international schools. Not everyone within the organization was on board with the change and the other regional accrediting agencies have differing policies on non-English language instruction.¹⁹⁹

In April of 2006, the North Central Association (NCA) and the SACS merged to form AdvancED Worldwide, the world's largest education community, which serves 15 Million students in 27,000 public and private schools in 65 countries worldwide.²⁰⁰

Colegio Karl C. Parrish

Colegio Karl C. Parrish in Barranquilla was founded in 1938 and was the first binational bilingual school in the country and in 1967 the first on the Atlantic coast to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and offer a U.S. diploma. The school is named after an American businessman who worked to improve the infrastructure of Barranquilla, including the development of a U.S. style wealthy suburb, El Prado, an upscale hotel, a modern port and a country club, as well as modernizing Barranquilla's public services.²⁰¹ Interest in a school originated with the Propeller Club/American Men's Society.²⁰² Many members had children with them in Barranquilla and "couldn't find a satisfactory education in English, which would prepare them to continue their studies in high school and college in the United States."

This was similar to the motivation in setting up government-run American schools in many other

¹⁹⁹ Rob Leveillee. Vice President of International Affairs, AdvancED. Telephone interview with author. 3 August 2009.

²⁰⁰ AdvancED Worldwide, "About Us" http://www.advanc-ed.org/about_us/? Accessed: 12 August 2009.

²⁰¹ Jorge Villalón Donoso, Historia de Barranquilla, Barranquilla: Ediciones Uninorte, 2000. Eduardo Posada-Carbó, The Colombian Caribbean: A Regional History, 1870 – 1950. Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1996.

²⁰² The Propeller Club is a non-profit organization that promotes maritime commerce and "is dedicated to the enhancement and well-being of all interests of the maritime community on a national and international basis" that was active in Barranquilla in the 1930's and later became the American Men's Society. From Propeller Club. "Home" <http://propellerclubhq.com/> Accessed: 22 July 2009.

countries. The founders discovered that many local families of varied nationalities, including many Colombians, supported the idea and the school was born. The founding fathers were led by Nicholas R. Agarino, a United Fruit Company executive who had a school-age daughter, Nancy, who he felt needed a proper American education. He enlisted the support of Americans Thomas P. Roche of the General Sales Corporation and Orville Johnson of Tropical Oil Company, and locals Dr. Marco Tulio Mendoza Amaris, Julio Mario Santo Domingo, Ignacio Blanco, and Europeans Johannes Cornelissen (Dutch) and Ivan Hilstad (Norwegian), all with school age children.²⁰³

The school opened in 1938 and started with only the lower grades but soon expanded to the eighth grade as parents chose to keep their children in Colombia, largely due to World War II.²⁰⁴ “The courses were modeled on those of New York State, and the students took the New York State Regents exams,” indicating the school’s allegiance to the American school system from its inception and allowing graduates to attend high school in the U.S.²⁰⁵ As an example of the schools binationalism, students pledged allegiance to both the U.S. and Colombian flags.²⁰⁶ The Board of Directors, with Agarino as president, operated the school, including supervision of the curriculum, appointing staff and answering to the Board of Trustees, which officially owned the school. In 1964 Dr. Burton Fox arrived from the Columbus School in Medellin, which had recently been SACS accredited, and quickly worked to have Parrish follow their lead.

The accreditation of Colegio Karl C. Parrish

²⁰³ Colegio Karl C. Parrish, “History” http://www.kcparrish.edu.co/english/about_history.html Accessed: 22 July 2009.

²⁰⁴ Burton Fox. Ex-Director, current board member, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview with author held in Barranquilla, Colombia, 18 June 2009.

²⁰⁵ Paternostro, 88.

²⁰⁶ Paternostro, 88.

In Dr. Fox's first three years the school added the 10th, 11th and 12th grades to offer a complete secondary school education. The school worked hard to complete SACS accreditation quickly to best serve their first class.

The goal was to be accredited before we graduated that first class. It wasn't a tough process at all, we just knew we were going to do it. Accreditation people from the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS) were very cooperative knowing our goal, and knowing they had already accredited in Latin America so they knew what they were up against. Entirely different approach than they have now. And by 1967 I was on the Latin American accreditation committee and the secondary commission. But I don't mean to say that that influenced the decision, it just made me more cognizant of what was needed. So we built those three years toward that goal, and also toward the goal of Colombian Ministry of Education approval of our *bachillerato* (high school).²⁰⁷

The school began the process by hiring certified teachers. For the school to get accredited all teachers had to be certified either in the United States or Colombia, but as the school focused on an English language-based education an effort was made to bring in ex-patriot instructors. When Dr. Fox arrived, about half of the school's instructors were ex-patriots but many of them were not certified teachers. The school quickly worked to get them certified. In that time it was much easier to get the teachers certified because as he put it, "the momentum was tremendous." This referred to efforts by SACS, the U.S. Office of Overseas Schools, US

²⁰⁷ Burton Fox. Ex-Director, current board member, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview with author held in Barranquilla, Colombia, 18 June 2009.

Department of State, the Association of Colombian-Caribbean American Schools (ACCAS)²⁰⁸ and the University of Alabama to become one of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "showcases of excellence." The University of Alabama signed a contract with ACCAS and began sending instructors to Colombia to offer Master's and Ph.D programs to teachers at ACCAS schools, which at the time included Parrish, Colegio Nueva Grenada (Bogota), Colegio Jorge Washington (Cartegena), Colegio Bolivar (Cali) and the Columbus School in Medellin.²⁰⁹

"It just happened to be that if you had 15 expats, and 6 of them were short some studies, and you got all this bunch of education courses coming down here anyway, for masters, it wasn't any problem to solve their problem through those same professors, or get them up there for summer school, to the campus." Dr. Fox later pointed out the difficulty in doing the same thing now. "School boards in those days were very liberal because they were getting a lot of support from the US Department of Education. So there was no problem releasing someone to be here for three weeks on a curriculum project or our people going there for three weeks. But nowadays if you went to some school board and said release a teacher [for] two weeks they'd say you're crazy. Then it was just a different attitude."²¹⁰

While the school worked to certify their teachers, it also needed to work on increasing some educational offerings. SACS requires that when a school has a certain number of students, it needs a guidance counselor/department. Many schools at the time did not have this as it was viewed as extraneous to budget conscious boards. At the time, not only Parrish but also other

²⁰⁸ At the time of the contract signed by the Association and the University of Alabama, it was still the Association of Colombian American Schools (ACAS) the Caribbean would be added in 1967.

²⁰⁹ Association of Colombian-Caribbean Schools, "History" <http://www.accas.org/history.htm> Accessed: 22 July 2009.

²¹⁰ Burton Fox. Ex-Director, current board member, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview with author held in Barranquilla, Colombia, 18 June 2009.

schools received a lot of outside assistance. So once a school identified something like a guidance counselor that the school needed for accreditation, the school's "director gets the school board to help sponsor having a guidance counselor, [and] the US State Department would put a little bit of a stipend in there to help with the position. SACS would then say, that's great, keep strengthening the department, so you kept all that leverage. So that was... using accreditation as a lever for a school to add extra things to its program." So the process of accreditation strengthened the school, because it was forced to begin offering services that it had previously not offered. The teachers were becoming certified, and the school was bringing in teachers who were experienced in teaching the new levels of 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. This also improved the level of education offered by the school. The school accomplished its goal and in 1967, "when those kids walked through that stage they had dual accreditation," graduating with both a Colombian and American diploma.²¹¹ This allowed parents to stop sending their children to the United States for high school as had been common when the school only offered up to the 8th grade level.

The school currently has 740 kids, 95% of which are Colombian nationals, with a nearly 100% university attendance rate. On average between 35 and 45% of students attend a university outside of Colombia, which coincides with the number of students who chose to sit for the SAT/ACT, which is offered in Barranquilla. Many of these students only leave to do one-year language programs, before returning to Colombia for an undergraduate degree.²¹² This number is also skewed by including students leaving Colombia for post graduate work, and as the schools have no student trackers in place, they have no idea what percentage of their students are

²¹¹ Burton Fox. Ex-Director, current board member, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview with author held in Barranquilla, Colombia, 18 June 2009.

²¹² Harper, Joseph. Message to the author. 4 August 2009. E-mail.

part of that demographic. The school recently began offering Advanced Placement courses, allowing students to receive college credit at American universities while still in high school.²¹³ Concerning rankings on the national exam, the ICFES Colegio Karl C. Parrish is consistently a top school and last year ranked second in Barranquilla and second overall for coastal schools. The school goes through their next SACS accreditation in April, 2010.²¹⁴

Colegio Karl C. Parrish offers a good look at the historical roots of SACS as it began to expand into both Latin America generally and Colombia specifically, demonstrating the forces at work and the parties involved. As noted by Dr. Fox, the process is much different now, which begs the question of what a school must do today to be accredited. Along these lines the next sections will focus on the accreditation process as it is today, and give a specific example of a school that went through the process in 2009, the Altamira International School, also located in Barranquilla.

Altamira as an example

The Altamira International School in Barranquilla was founded in 1992, and like many private schools in Colombia, began as a preschool, adding grades as the first class aged until it now offers a traditional k-12 education, accredited by the Colombian Ministry of Education in 1995. In 2000 the school moved to its current location with facilities similar to those offered in the US.²¹⁵ The school's founder, owner and director Sra. Priscilla Ruiz de Vergara, worked at Colegio Karl. C. Parrish for thirteen years before deciding to found her own school, with the

²¹³ Colegio Karl C. Parrish. "Secondary" http://www.kcparrish.edu.co/english/secondary_High.html Accessed: August 1, 2009

²¹⁴ Gaffney, Patrick. High school principal, Colegio Karl C. Parrish, Personal interview with author held in Barranquilla, Colombia, 18 June 2009.

²¹⁵ Altamira International School, "School's History" http://www.altamira.edu.co/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=28 Accessed: 6 August 2009.

hopes of offering the city another bilingual option for their children.²¹⁶ The school was accredited in April 2009 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and for the first time this year will offer a dual diploma to its graduates. It is the second school in Barranquilla accredited by SACS, the other being Parrish.²¹⁷

The school has 750 Students, 98% of which are Colombian citizens. Only three or four percent of the student population goes to university abroad, but nearly 100% attend university. The basic language of instruction is English, with a largely bilingual staff, a majority of whom are Colombian. The school seeks to offer a typical US-style college-preparatory program, while at the same time meeting the demands of the national curriculum.²¹⁸

Ruiz de Vergara and Altamira sought SACS accreditation for a number of reasons. The primary reasons being:

having the privilege of having kids graduate with both diplomas, the high school and the Colombian *bachillerato*. Also, having the possibility to be acquainted with all the programs that come from the states, being able to attend workshops, and being up to date with the new theories and tendencies. So that was the most important aspect of it all. That for me was the priority. I wanted to be in the midst of the all the changes and all

²¹⁶ Priscilla Ruiz de Vergara. Telephone interview with author. 5 August 2009.

²¹⁷ Marymount Barranquilla became accredited several months later, becoming the third school in Barranquilla. Also, the AdvancED website lists Colegio Albania as another accredited school in Barranquilla, but it is actually located in the Cerrajón, the mining community located in the Guajira, but keeps an office in Barranquilla as the Cerrajón is not easily accessible. AdvancED Worldwide, "AdvancED Institutional Locator" <http://www.advanced.org/oasis2/u/par/accreditation/summary?institutionId=17963> Accessed: 12 August 2009.

²¹⁸ Altamira International School, "Educational Perspective" http://www.altamira.edu.co/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=26&Itemid=41 Accessed: 6 August 2009.

the evolution of education and not being caged in. I wanted to be a school that innovated. I wanted to be in the midst of all the changes.²¹⁹

Patrick Gaffney, high school principal at Parrish, cited the ability to offer an American high school diploma as chief among the benefits of SACS accreditation as well.²²⁰ However, that school has been accredited for 45 years and many of the benefits of accreditation do not stand out as they do at a school recently accredited like Altamira. Ruiz de Vergara points out one of the main benefits offered by SACS accreditation, and that is the access to modern educational thought, theory and policy. With a changing world comes the need to change the way we prepare students for university, and the Colombian national system is still very traditional in its methodology. SACS offers one way to modernize a school curriculum and stay up to date on changes.

The school began the process of getting accredited in 2003, six years before it achieved accreditation, demonstrating that this can be a lengthy process. Also, having worked at a SACS school for many years, Ruiz de Vergara was more familiar with the process than other area directors probably are, which may have sped the process up. Other than time, there are many other very specific things a school goes through, although with the development of technology, many of the old quantitative things like books per student are becoming outdated.²²¹

Once a school indicates interest in becoming a SACS school by submitting an application and application fee, they are assigned an advisor to help them through what is essentially an eight-step process. The school then performs a readiness self assessment before hosting a

²¹⁹ Priscilla Ruiz de Vergara. Director and founder, Altamira International School. Telephone interview with author. 5 August 2009.

²²⁰ Patrick Gaffney. High school principal, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview with author. 18 June 2009.

²²¹ In speaking with Dr. Leveille about the old 'books per student' regulations of the past he cited technological advances like Amazon's Kindle or internet based virtual libraries as examples of offering the same services and said SACS now looks more at usage/circulation records to indicate student use in place of counting books.

Readiness Visit, where a SACS official determines a school's readiness to pursue accreditation and identifies areas in need of improvement.²²² At this point the school goes from Applicant to Candidate and begins to prepare itself for its official Quality Assurance Review (QAR). The school is given the QAR team's contact information and they work with the team to prepare the school for the visit. The size of the team varies depending on the size of the school, with teams ranging from 3-7 members.²²³

One of the major steps in getting ready for the QAR team's visit is meeting 'SACS standards', which is loosely put. The standards are covered broadly in AdvancED's publication *Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools*.

1. **Vision and Purpose:** A school needs to establish a vision and purpose as well as identify goals to advance that vision.²²⁴
2. **Governance and Leadership:** This standard necessitates operating under the jurisdiction of a governing board which "establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school," "recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative head of the school" and "ensures compliance with applicable local, state and national laws, standards and regulations". Therefore it sets forth the need for a controlling governing board that keeps the school on path. This is the standard that also calls for a system of analysis and review of student performance. The school must also offer leadership opportunities to both students and teachers and allow stakeholders a meaningful voice in decision-making. "A

²²² A SACS Self Assessment form can be found in Appendix A at the end of this thesis.

²²³ AdvancED, "Overview of the AdvancED Standards and Accreditation Process for Schools" http://www.advanced.org/accreditation/school_accreditation/accreditation_process/? Accessed: 12 August 2009.

²²⁴ AdvancED, "Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools." http://www.advanced.org/accreditation/standards/advanced_school_standards.pdf Accessed: 12 August 2009, 9.

school is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and non-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations in their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation."²²⁵

- 3. Teaching and Learning:** This is the standard dealing with curriculum, making sure that the school's is "based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes." This standard also mandates that teachers use proven and engaging instructional practices which provide the students the opportunity to apply their knowledge to real world situations. Basically, this is the standard that makes sure the school is using the best teaching practices and is self-evaluating, gathering data to check up on practices to see how they are working. It makes sure the students are involved, and focused on investigation and higher order thinking.²²⁶ This is also the standard that deals with technology available to the students, although there is no specific technology mentioned due to the rapidly changing face of technology. "We want them to use information technology to support the curriculum and assure they are using it appropriately."²²⁷

²²⁵ AdvancED, "Accreditation" 10-11.

²²⁶ AdvancED, "Accreditation" 13.

²²⁷ Rob Leveillee. Vice President of International Affairs, AdvancED. Telephone interview with author. 3 August 2009.

4. **Documenting and Using Results:** “The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance.”²²⁸ This covers student evaluation, however it is done, saying it must function and be “reliable, valid and bias free” while improving student performance. The results must constantly be reviewed to continue improving.
5. **Resources and Support Systems:** “The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.” This refers to both human and facility resources available to students. The staff must be certified, well prepared and trained in their area. Everyone participates in professional development. The financial department is audited regularly. There is a crisis management plan in place for emergencies. There must be counseling, support for special needs students, career guidance and an overall safe environment for the students. “A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations.”²²⁹
6. **Stakeholder Communication and Relationships:** This standard is pretty simple, the school needs to communicate all necessary information to the school’s stakeholders through formal channels and include the stakeholders in the ongoing improvement of the school.²³⁰

²²⁸ AdvancED, “Accreditation,” 14.

²²⁹ AdvancED, “Accreditation” 15.

²³⁰ AdvancED, “Accreditation” 16.

7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement: This is what it says it is, following up on the previous six standards, making sure you view accreditation as a process, not a status.²³¹

While much of this describes the qualitative goals of SACS, there are some very specific quantitative goals that deserve mention as they concern some areas schools with limited means have difficulty adhering to.

“Teachers must have a bachelor’s degree which includes 12 semester hours of professional education (as part of, or in addition to the degree) from an institution recognized by a U.S. regional accrediting agency,” as well as have 24 hours in their field. “Host country professional personnel that meet the qualifications for certification or licensing by the host country in which they are employed are considered in compliance with the standard.” Teachers who don’t have these qualifications can be actively (at least six credits a year) enrolled in a program to meet the requirements.²³² This presents a large obstacle for many schools in Colombia. Ruiz de Vergara, who was nearly 100% supportive of SACS accreditation, cited this as the one major difficulty. “We have to offer a competitive salary, pay for their housing, pay for the visa, pay for their flight, transportation. It’s really expensive.”²³³ Rob Leveille Vice President for International Services at AdvancED, the umbrella organization over SACS, commented on this in a telephone interview. “Many of the overseas schools will bring people in with just a bachelor degree” and in light of this “we have to be a little bit flexible,” adding that schools can employ teachers that are working

²³¹ AdvancED, “Accreditation” 17.

²³² AdvancED, “Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools in Latin American and other International Regions.” February, 2007 http://www.advanc-ed.org/accreditation/standards/la_school_standards.pdf Accessed: July 28th, 2009, 33.

²³³ Priscilla Ruiz de Vergara. Director and founder, Altamira International School. Telephone interview with author. 5 August 2009.

towards certification, which boils down to taking one three credit education class per semester.²³⁴ These teachers also need to have scheduled planning time, with no other responsibilities, and participate in at least 120 hours of professional development every five years, an average of three full days a year.

There are also regulations regarding class size and teaching hours. Class sizes are specifically limited to a size well below the average of urban Colombian public schools. Fourth to twelfth grade can be no larger than 25 students. First through third grade is capped at 23 and kindergarten at 20. All limits can be expanded by five students if an aide is employed. All teachers must offer a minimum of 130 hours of instruction per 180 days.²³⁵ In private discussions with teachers at Parrish, this is one area for which they were cited during their last accreditation visit. The school solved the problem by adding extra days.²³⁶

The administrative head must have a graduate degree with at least 18 hours in administration or supervision, have at least three years of educational experience (teacher, counselor, librarian, etc.), and be the school's highest paid employee.²³⁷ The school's counselors and media specialists must have a graduate degree in their assigned field from an institution recognized by a U.S. regional accrediting agency. This is significant because this pushes schools to employ US trained counselors and media specialists as they must have graduated from schools that are accredited by a US agency. It also requires a graduate degree, which is significant, because librarians are considered media specialists and this is a position that is not normally filled by someone with a graduate degree in Colombia.

²³⁴ Rob Leveillee. Vice President of International Affairs, AdvancED. Telephone interview. 3 August 2009.

²³⁵ AdvancED, "Latin" 32, 33.

²³⁶ Blair Spearn. Former primary school instructor, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Phone interview with author. 22 June 2009.

²³⁷ AdvancED, "Latin," 32.

Table 4.2: Staff requirements for SACS accreditation²³⁸

Number of students	1-249	250-499	500-749	750-999	1000-1249	1500-Up
Chief Administrator	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other Educational Administrators	0	1	1½	2½	2	3 + ½ for every add'l 250
Guidance Professionals	½*	1	1	1½	2½	3 + ½ for every add'l 250
Library or Media Specialists	½*	1	1	1	2**	2
Secretaries or Clerks for administration and staff support	½	1	1½	2½	3	3 + ½ for every add'l 250

*For schools with an enrollment of fewer than 100 students, designated staff provides services, e.g., library media, guidance, that meets the standards that are applicable to the program area.

**After employing one professionally qualified librarian or media specialist, the school may employ a professionally qualified technology or information specialist to meet the requirement.

Thus for a school like Altamira that has 750 students, they need to have one Chief Administrator (Sra. Ruiz de Vergara), 2½ other administrators (they have three; head of high school, head of primary, and head of preschool), 1½ guidance professionals (they have two), one librarian or guidance specialist, and 2½ secretaries (they have three).

After providing for all of this, and determining that the school is ready, the school hosts the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team and get an oral exit review delivered to the school's stakeholders. The QAR Chair submits a written report to AdvancED. The final report is reviewed by a AdvancED Reader and then submitted to the school and the QAR Chair. The recommended accreditation status is submitted to the proper AdvancED officials for final review. The school then communicates its status to community stakeholders. Assuming things went well, the school is then accredited. There are three more steps in what AdvancED calls the

²³⁸ AdvancED, "Latin" 32.

accreditation process. The others are intended to implement the philosophy of John A. Stoops, the late Executive Director of CITA. "Accreditation is an activity, not a status. Schools are accredited because of the way they move, not the way they stand."²³⁹ Step six begins the "ongoing steps" as the school begins to work on the recommendations of the QAR team concerning areas of concern. Step seven requires the school "adhere to AdvancED standards and engage in quality continuous improvement." The final step is the school sends an Accreditation Progress Report regarding the QAR team's recommendations to the State Office. At this point, the school hosts QAR teams every five years to ensure continued quality.²⁴⁰

Advantages of SACS Accreditation

Every option in seeking international recognition of the education offered at your school has benefits and detractions. Seeking accreditation from an international accreditation agency like SACS is no exception. This section will examine the pros and cons offered by this particular pathway to recognition.

Most schools seeking accreditation or affiliation with an international agency are seeking validation of the education offered at their school for a number of reasons, including university and parental recognition of excellence. SACS offers this. Schools and districts in the US participate "voluntarily" but a school that has lost its accreditation, due to the lack of a federal standard, is making it much more difficult for students to get into university, although the diploma is still valid.²⁴¹ Schools outside the US demonstrate a confidence in their education by seeking accreditation; it gives the school credibility and provides an external validation of its

²³⁹ AdvancED, "Overview of the AdvancED Standards and Accreditation Process for Schools." http://www.advanced.org/accreditation/school_accreditation/accreditation_process/? Accessed: 12 August 2009.

²⁴⁰ AdvancED, "Steps to School Accreditation" http://www.advanced.org/accreditation/school_accreditation/steps_to_school_accreditation/ Accessed: 12 August 2009.

²⁴¹ Patrick Gaffney. High school principal, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview with author. 18 June 2009. And Rob Leveillee. Vice President of International Affairs, AdvancED. Telephone interview. 3 August 2009.

quality.²⁴² As parents become more savvy about researching possible schools, this is an important means of demonstrating excellence.

There are other more tangible benefits as well in belonging to the SACS/AdvancED family. All of the SACS schools have access to the AdvancED Resource network, which is designed to support schools' efforts to continuously improve, and includes Peer to Peer Practices, a chat room for SACS educators, *Best Practices*, a database of proven practices, and a publication/worksheet database, *Resources and Tools*.²⁴³ This is valuable because education is often a lot of trial and error, and this works to bring together the accumulated knowledge of all the educators in AdvancED's network of schools. "We broker the talent. It's not unusual at all to have a school call us and say, look, we're really struggling with the whole issue of library technology. We put them in contact with three schools who are doing it really well."²⁴⁴

A recent study discovered that the biggest difference between excellent schools and the others was quality teachers. Excellent teachers want to work at excellent schools, and in the international teaching arena, this is sometimes difficult to do. As a teacher who travels between countries and schools, I can attest to the importance of a school being accredited/affiliated by a recognized institution. Getting SACS accreditation is one way to do this.

Disadvantages of SACS Accrediation

The biggest negative for Colombian schools is the cost. This is not to say that accreditation itself is expensive, as the annual fee is two-thousand dollars, which even in a

²⁴² Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Britanico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009.

²⁴³ AdvancED Worldwide, "AdvancED Resource Network" http://www.advanced.org/products_and_services/advanced_resource_network/? Accessed: 12 August 2009.

²⁴⁴ Rob Leveillee. Vice President of International Affairs, AdvancED. Telephone interview. 3 August 2009.

country like Colombia is not too bad, equal to about five months of a single student's tuition at Altamira. The major accreditation costs for many schools involve improving the infrastructure and school resources. A school needs computers, up-to-date textbooks, a comprehensive library and most difficult for many schools, professional staff that meet SACS standards. Finding teachers, psychologists, counselors, administrators and librarians with the education necessary is not only expensive, but difficult. Colombia's international reputation is also a problem, although it is improving.

Mathews in his article "The Uniqueness of International Education" cited three types of teachers that work at international schools. 1. Long term teachers, who may move from school to school, or who have established themselves in the local community; 2. expatriate wives, whose availability depends on their husbands' careers; and 3. So-called 'transients', who are often "newly qualified teachers seeking a range of short-term experience and adventure in the early stages of their career."²⁴⁵ The teachers at these schools fit that bill to a degree, but a disproportionately large percentage of the teachers fit into the third category, and almost none in the second. For example, the average stay for ex-pat teachers at Parrish is two years.²⁴⁶ Thus, the schools are constantly restaffing and have difficulty persuading teachers to buy into the schools' vision.

While Dr. Leveille mentioned that they have to be flexible in accrediting international schools, one wonders whether SACS deals with foreign schools in the same way as it did Negro colleges in the early/mid 20th century. Are these international schools held to the same standard as American SACS schools? The organization publishes two sets of standards, one for American

²⁴⁵ M. Mathews, "The Uniqueness of International Education. Part 11. International Schools Journal Spring, 1989, 24-33. Cited in Mejia, A.M. de Power, Prestige and Bilingualism: International Perspectives on Elite Bilingual Education Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2002, 17.

²⁴⁶ Patrick Gaffney. High school principal, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview with author. 18 June 2009.

schools, and another for “Latin American and other International Regions.”²⁴⁷ This policy has its historic roots in the afore-mentioned 1960 decree about moving SACS into Latin America.

“Develop a method of recognizing schools in Latin America that do not meet Southern Association standards but wish to participate in activities involving educators of the United States and Latin America.”²⁴⁸ Echoing this, it states on the company’s current webpage that “[t]he standards apply to all categories of schools, with the exception of postsecondary schools and schools in Latin America.”²⁴⁹ This is easily attributed to the differences brought about in the last few years by the changes to the English-only structure, but certainly calls into question how schools that are judged by different standards are equal, which merits greater study.

There’s also some question of how seriously schools take the process. Dr. Gaffney, who served on several accrediting teams for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges before becoming high school principal at Parrish, sees this as the biggest problem. “I don’t know how many people actually have a clear understanding of the accreditation process and what it actually means. From what I’ve seen so far, we go through accreditation next year, there’s a lot of talk about filling in the blanks, versus an actual critical analysis of ‘are you conducting best practices’ and ‘can you change things.’ I think one of the big things I’m seeing, and I’ve seen it at other schools, is that they don’t see it as a living, breathing document. It’s a task, it’s shelved, it’s a task it’s shelved.”²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ AdvancEd, “AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools: For Schools Seeking NCA CASI or SACS CASI Accreditation” http://www.advanc-ed.org/accreditation/standards/advanced_school_standards.pdf Accessed: 12 August 2009. And AdvancED, “Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools in Latin American and other International Regions” February, 2007. http://www.advanc-ed.org/accreditation/standards/la_school_standards.pdf Accessed: July 28th, 2009.

²⁴⁸ Fox, Burton, 26 - 27.

²⁴⁹ AdvancED, “School Accreditation Overview” http://www.advanc-ed.org/accreditation/school_accreditation/ Accessed: 12 August 2009.

²⁵⁰ Patrick Gaffney. High school principal, Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Personal interview with author. 18 June 2009.

Lastly are the questions of cultural imperialism and social control. Many of the SACS schools began as what were essentially displaced American schools offering an education that prepared students to move back to the states at some time, and finish their education there, at whatever level. This legacy has a hold on the schools still. Although the student body in these schools is nearly all Colombian, students still take a mandatory US history class instead of something more regional and relevant to their probable life experiences.²⁵¹ This is augmented by a world history course, and the Colombian Ministry of Education mandates instruction in Colombian Studies (often one of the only courses taught in Spanish). A history of the Americas might better serve the students, or expanding the Colombian Studies or World History courses.

Another example of the ‘American school’ legacy is that students at the five original SACS schools still celebrate the American holiday, Thanksgiving, and are the only schools in the country to get that Thursday and Friday off of school, as an American student would.²⁵² If viewed through the lens of *Accion de Gracias*, or a basic giving of thanks for the blessings we have, is one thing; however, it is often accompanied by the traditional American tale of the pilgrims and turkeys, which have no relevance to the typical Colombian student.

Social control of the schools is also an issue. “By definition, to the extent that an organization is caught up in a larger society it is subject to social control processes – it exists in a societal web which applies sanctions (negative or positive).”²⁵³ Of course, different organizations are subject to different mechanisms and processes of control, depending on the level of performance of the organizations, the substantive nature of the standard of performance and the structure of the inter-organizational relations. The classic mechanism of institutional

²⁵¹ Joseph Harper, Colegio Karl C. Parrish high school teacher. Message to the author. 4 August 2009. E-mail.

²⁵² Many of the other international schools celebrate Thanksgiving or *Accion de Gracias* with a lunch or giving of gifts to the schools service employees but none get the days off.

²⁵³ Wiley, 38.

control, the marketplace, is very much at play in Colombia where inefficient competitors are weeded out as parents decide to enroll their students in schools that are viewed as better, often due to accreditation or affiliation of some sort.

Although this is the classic mechanism for the regulation of businesses as well as other organizations, there are, of course, many other such mechanisms. For instance, coercive sanctions operating through the law, electoral systems, and licensing and certifying agencies are a diverse set of mechanisms used to control organizational behavior. “Many of these mechanisms operate in the control of higher education.”²⁵⁴ A school offering itself up for certification by a United States agency only adds to possible coercion as the school tries to fit the agency’s idea of how Colombians should be taught.

“The certification association is a peculiarly western and especially American device of social control. It is a mechanism of self-regulation that develops in societies where hierarchical regulation is weak and where relevant professional groups believe market forces are inadequate for the maintenance of desired standards. Typically, these are institutional areas where profitability is not an adequate criterion for the accomplishment of organizational goals. Stated positively, certifying associations develop in areas where the pursuit of specific social values is part of a professional mandate,” like schools.²⁵⁵

It can be correctly argued that in Colombia, where there are other criteria for judging performance than the decisions of the accrediting agency, accreditation is not as important as it is in the United States, as is well illustrated by the percentage of schools in each area that go through the certification process. In Colombia only 11 schools in the entire country are

²⁵⁴ Wiley, 39.

²⁵⁵ Wiley, 38.

accredited, while in the United States nearly every school in the states covered by SACS has ‘volunteered’ to go through the accrediting process.

A certifying association is only as strong as the sanctions or rewards used to control applicants. Certification in the US has for all intents and purposes reached the strongest stage of certification, licensing, with the power of coercion due to the extreme difficulties that arise for schools that are not accredited. In Colombia, where parents look at the annual ICFES school rankings that are published yearly by the magazine *Dinero* to determine how well a school is doing, this lessens the power of SACS in controlling the school. Students at SACS schools must take the ICFES exam like everywhere else in the country. According to the principals at these schools, their students do not perform as well as they could on this exam for two reasons. The first is that the ICFES as an exam is flawed, testing a broad range of superficial knowledge rather than cognitive skill. The second is that due to its flaws, SACS schools do not teach to the ICFES as some other schools do. The schools frequently reinforce this idea of preparing for university rather than the exam to their parent community. This is important because many less expensive schools that do prepare specifically for the ICFES may be ranked higher in the *Dinero* annual report.

Closing

Accrediting agencies in the United States were borne of the lack of national Department of Education standards. In the 1960’s at the behest of presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson these agencies began to expand globally, with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ sphere of influence being Latin America. Five schools in Colombia chose to seek accreditation. One such school was Colegio Karl C. Parrish in Barranquilla, which was

accredited in 1964. There are now eleven accredited schools in Colombia, the most recent being the Altamira International School, also in Barranquilla.

The manner in which schools get accredited is basically the same, but with changes that afford for the modern diversity of interested schools, such as allowance of a 50/50 Spanish/English instruction and realization that resources for poorer schools are an issue.

SACS accreditation offers a school many benefits including access to its community of educators, a dual US/Colombian diploma, and a seal of quality that demonstrates to teachers, parents, and students a pursuit of excellence and the willingness to subject themselves to outside validation. However, there are possible detractions as well, such as the high cost of getting the necessary resources and staff to meet expectations and the possibility of social control of the institution and cultural imperialism.

Chapter Four: The International Baccalaureate

Seeking American accreditation is not the only option available to elite bilingual schools looking to demonstrate to their stakeholders their academic excellence. The International Baccalaureate has spread quickly around the globe with its unique curriculum being implemented in a variety of diverse schools. Designed to be flexible in varied environments, it seeks to offer a global perspective without upsetting the national cultural norms. Twenty-one schools in Colombia currently offer the program, with thirteen of those receiving authorization in the last eight years, demonstrating its popularity. However, only three of those schools are on the coast, and one of them is considering dropping it after just a few years. This chapter examines the IB, its history, its curriculum, the process a school has to go through to become an IB World School, as well as looking at the varying success implementing it on the coast. The chapter finishes by examining the pros and cons of the IB.

The History of the International Baccalaureate

The stirrings of the International Baccalaureate began long before the term came into popular use. The First World War eloquently illustrated the disaster that is possible in a world where nations distrust one another. Thus the League of Nations was born, with offices in Geneva, Switzerland. The internationally diverse staff of the LON sought to provide a first rate education for their children and helped found the International School of Geneva (Ecolint) in 1924.²⁵⁶ One year later the director of the school, Paul Meyhoffer, put out feelers for interest in a “*maturité internationale*.” It was to be a general exam for students leaving secondary school, which all countries (in Europe at least) would recognize. Nothing came of Meyhoffer’s attempt,

²⁵⁶Ecolint stands for École Internationale de Genève

but the seed had been planted, a general exam that was universally accepted by European Universities.²⁵⁷

Ecolint was the only major international school to survive World War II. In 1951, Ecolint founded the International School Association (ISA) in order to help the growing number of international schools, all over the world, with their common problems.”²⁵⁸ First among these problems was the one pointed out 26 years earlier, how to best prepare students for the various international universities? They needed an internationally accepted program that could be implemented within the various national systems.

The idea of an international school was something new. Most were founded following World War II as people became more mobile for a number of reasons, including diplomatic and military careers. Also, prior to the war, countries tended to look after their own expatriates. The French educated their citizens in *lycées français à l'étranger*, which were widely viewed as the most prestigious foreign community educational system. These schools used the French *baccalauréat* as a means of getting their students into French universities. The English had their own schools and used the Cambridge Overseas General Certificate of Education (GCE), the Americans used the College Entrance Examination Board; the Germans, the Goethe Institutes; the Italians, Leonardo Institutes. Thus, with each nation looking after its own, it was not previously necessary to establish an international baccalaureate. Also, universities were originally less selective, admitting mostly on the ability to pay tuition.²⁵⁹

Following the war, government subsidies made university admission available to a broader portion of the population and thus more competitive, usually selecting on the basis of

²⁵⁷ Alec D.C. Peterson, *Schools Across Frontiers* (Chicago, IL: La Salle, 2003), 15.

²⁵⁸ Peterson, 15.

²⁵⁹ Mathews, 14.

high school exams such as the French *baccalauréat* or university entrance exams. As Alec Peterson, the 1st Director-General of the International Baccalaureate Office stated in his book, *Schools Across Frontiers*, “To compete successfully in these examinations it was necessary not merely to have a sound general education, but to have followed the national syllabus of the country to which the student hoped to go to college. Thus when I first visited Ecolint as a consultant, I found students doing advanced physics for entry to science faculties divided into four small groups, one following the syllabus for the Swiss *maturité fédérale*, one for the English GCE A-Level, one that of the French *baccalauréat*, and a fourth preparing for the American College Board Advanced placement.”²⁶⁰

This made it very difficult for international schools, financially and in terms of keeping the school “international” while it was being divided into nationality groups. This situation necessitated an international baccalaureate with a unified curriculum that would facilitate entrance into all of the best universities in Europe and North America. This would end the division in the schools, cutting costs and ease the difficulty in staffing the school.

In 1961 after interest by the international school community had clearly increased, teachers at Ecolint, led by the newly appointed head of the English-language section, Desmond Cole-Baker, and the social studies chair, Robert Leach, began to transform this idea into a reality. Leach obtained a grant from UNESCO for \$2,500 and held a small conference of social studies teachers from the international school community in order to explore a way that international social studies curriculum could be standardized.²⁶¹ In 1962 they sponsored a conference and the term “International Baccalaureate” was coined for the unified exam they planned to propose. In

²⁶⁰Peterson, 16.

²⁶¹ Elisabeth Fox, “International Schools and the International Baccalaureate” *Harvard Educational Review* 55:1 1985, 57.

1964 a separate association named the International Schools Examination Syndicate (ISES) was formed, sponsored by Ecolint and comprised largely of Ecolint teachers.²⁶²

After securing funding by the Twentieth Century Fund, ISES began a program of development and began to involve more people and organizations, including Alec Peterson, the head of Oxford's Educational Studies department. At the time the Ford Foundation was investing millions of dollars setting up the United Nations International School (UNIS) in New York in the tradition of Ecolint and saw the possibilities of using this new international baccalaureate. They suggested the ISES council add Desmond Cole,²⁶³ Director of UNIS, and Harlan Hanson, Director of the College Entrance Examinations Board Advanced Placement (AP) Program.²⁶⁴ "In 1966 when negotiations for a larger grant from the Ford Foundation began to lag, Oxford moved to take over the project. Peterson agreed to serve as director of IBO (ISES changed its name to the International Baccalaureate Office, IBO in 1967), part time until January 1967 and full time (on his sabbatical leave) for six months thereafter."²⁶⁵ Peterson and Hanson secured a Ford Foundation grant of \$300,000 dollars and set out to use the money to finally test the ideas of the International Baccalaureate.

The creation of the International Baccalaureate

In creating the International Baccalaureate the involved parties had to take many things into account. First, they had to decide how to create a unified international curriculum and examination system that synthesized the most demanding aspects of each of the various European systems. The English GCE tested students in only three subjects, while the West

²⁶²Mathews, 20.

²⁶³No relation to Ecolint's Desmond Cole-Baker

²⁶⁴Peterson, 22

²⁶⁵ M. Mayer, Diploma: International Schools and University Entrance New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1968, 225.

German and French systems demanded that students continue studying the broad range of topics they had taken throughout secondary school. The founders also looked to modernize the curriculum, putting aside the memorization of a broad range of topics and focusing on teaching students how to learn. They created a curriculum framework that they felt offered “a response to the continuing search for balance by including and attempting to resolve such inherent dichotomies as national vs international perspectives; depth vs breadth emphasis; traditional vs modern interpretations; requirements vs choice regulations; theoretical vs practical learning; subject centred vs interdisciplinary approaches.”²⁶⁶ The curriculum remains largely the same today and its specifics will be addresses later in this chapter.

Peterson and company had other problems. They needed to find a group of schools that would teach their new curriculum, a group of parents who would risk their children’s futures by enrolling them in the newly developed IB classes, an agreement by “a significant number” of universities in various target countries that would recognize the degree as qualification for entry, and assurance of sufficient funds “to ensure that the schools and students who had made this commitment were not let down by the sudden collapse of the project in mid course.”²⁶⁷

Much of this was ironed out at the Sevres Conference in 1967. The Conference included a broad range of international interests and not only concretized the curriculum that is still the center of the IB today but also found the solutions to many of the afore-mentioned problems.²⁶⁸

Three Swiss universities, fourteen British, several American and the entire centralized university system of France and Sweden agreed to accept students, on a provisional basis at least, if they

²⁶⁶Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson (Eds.) International Education: Principles and Practice, London: Kogan page, Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2001, 67-8.

²⁶⁷Peterson, 24.

²⁶⁸Fox, “International Schools and the International Baccalaureate”, 57.

had received an IB Diploma. In 1970, after two years of trials, the first 29 students sat for the IB examinations.²⁶⁹

In the next six years the number of students who took the exam jumped to 567. The students who took the exam displayed academic success in university and the “rising numbers of families living abroad and seeking higher education outside their home countries had flooded university admissions and placement offices with more school leaving exam results than ever before, and the differences between them were confusing. It made sense to many universities to cooperate with an international, foundations-supported experiment that might give them a common international standard on which to judge such applicants.”²⁷⁰ As the reputation of the IB grew and more universities accepted it for admission, it garnered more international attention.

The program continued its quick expansion, and in 1972 the International Baccalaureate operated in the black for the first time. However, as they grew, they needed more income. They made most of their money by charging exam fees but after 1976 began to charge dues to official IB World Schools.²⁷¹ In 1974, at another conference in Sevres, it was noted that over 80 international schools were on a waiting list to offer the IB after the experimental period was over. The conference attendees suggested that the IB be made available to as many schools as possible, including schools in developing countries.

In the beginning the participating schools were largely private international schools, but over time this changed. Now over half of all IB schools are government-run with no tuition fees required to attend.²⁷² It was not until the 1980’s that the IB began to get widespread university

²⁶⁹ Peterson, 31.

²⁷⁰ Mathews, 62.

²⁷¹ Mathews, 66.

²⁷² IBO, “History” <http://www.ibo.org/history/> Accessed: 7 June 2009

recognition, as many countries feared the IB would take the best and the brightest out of their national education system. “Today, the diploma is accepted by universities around the world, including the best universities in North America, the UK, continental Europe, and Australia, where the majority of diploma graduates enter higher education.”²⁷³ In 1994 the International Baccalaureate added the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in order to offer an IB education to younger students, aged 11-16. Three years later, in 1997, they began the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for ages 3-11. “The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is offered in more than 1,100 schools in over 100 countries. Approximately 14 per cent more schools offer the Programme each year around the world. It enjoys recognition for university entrance in all of the developed countries and in most of the developing world; as such, it represents the most widely known end-of-secondary school qualification not tied to a particular country.” Currently, the IB works with 2,715 schools in 138 countries to offer the three IB Programmes to approximately 745,000 students.²⁷⁴

Table 5.1: Number of schools by programme combination and region²⁷⁵

	<u>Africa/ Europe/ Middle East</u>	<u>Asia- Pacific</u>	<u>Latin America</u>	<u>North America & the Caribbean</u>	<u>Total schools</u>
PYP only	29	54	15	190	288
MYP only	10	37	5	315	367
DP only	551	191	188	681	1,611
All three	52	48	21	14	135
PYP+MYP	19	11	11	15	56
PYP+DP	28	30	14	7	79
MYP+DP	37	13	14	115	179

²⁷³ IBO, “History of the IB - Timeline” <http://www.ibo.org/history/timeline/> Accessed: 7 June 2009

²⁷⁴ IBO, “Fast Facts” <http://www.ibo.org/facts/fastfacts/index.cfm> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

²⁷⁵ IBO, “IB World Schools Statistics” <http://www.ibo.org/facts/schoolstats/progcombinationsbyregion.cfm> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

Total schools	726	384	268	1337	2,715
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Number of programmes by region

Total PYP	128	143	61	226	558
Total MYP	118	109	51	459	737
Total DP	668	282	237	817	2,004
Total programmes	914	534	349	1,502	3,299

History in Latin America

The international baccalaureate is an international program, with an international curriculum, created by an international body of educators. It therefore has international prices. The mean yearly income in the United States in 2006 was \$35,499.²⁷⁶ The following year, the mean yearly income in Bolivia was \$1,260.²⁷⁷ As one of the poorest nations in the region, Bolivia demonstrates the financial difficulty that Latin American schools have in meeting international standards in education. Low average incomes mean that only the upper echelons can afford to send their kids to schools whose tuitions have to be high enough to pay for the IB and the teachers to implement it, who in turn require expensive training and demand a higher salary.

The first school in Latin America to explore the possibility of using the IB curriculum was Santiago College in Santiago, Chile in 1961. This included getting permission from the Ministry of Education “to pilot its version of the IB as a national experiment for reform,” making it possible for the school to offer an English-based international core curriculum with Spanish options that “would meet the requirements of the IB as well as those of Chilean, European and

²⁷⁶U.S. Census Bureau: Housing and Household Economic Statistics Information, “Annual Demographic Survey, March Supplement” Last Revised August 29th, 2006.

http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032006/perinc/new01_001.htm Accessed: 6 August 2009.

²⁷⁷World Bank, “Bolivia Country Brief.”

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/LACEXT/BOLIVIAEXTN/0,,menuPK:322289~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:322279,00.html> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

U.S. universities.”²⁷⁸ However, the school did not become an official IB world school until 1981.

The International Baccalaureate did come to South America before it came to North America, but just barely. The British School of Montevideo, Uruguay was the 11th school in the world to offer the IB in January, 1971, while the United Nations School in New York, the first in North America, was the 12th.²⁷⁹ The program soon moved from Chile into neighboring Argentina where St. Catherine's School - Moorlands School in Buenos Aires began offering the IB Diploma in 1973.²⁸⁰ The IB has since expanded to 349 Latin American IB World Schools in 17 different countries, which offer at least one of the IB Programmes.²⁸¹ For many years Buenos Aires had more IB schools than any other city in the world. However, in the last few years the IB in Chicago has become the leader according to Gloria McDowell, Senior Head of the Latin American International Baccalaureate Office in Buenos Aires.²⁸²

The Latin American programs may use either Spanish or English as its “working language,” although the majority are taught in English.²⁸³ International Baccalaureate schools in Latin America offer a number of other languages, including French, Italian, German, and Portuguese.

²⁷⁸ Elisabeth Fox, “International Schools and the International Baccalaureate” Harvard Educational Review 55:1, 1985, 62

²⁷⁹ IBO, “British Schools” <http://www.ibo.org/school/000011/> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

²⁸⁰ IBO, “St. Catherine's School - Moorlands School” <http://www.ibo.org/school/000049/> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

²⁸¹ IBO, “IB World School Statistics” <http://www.ibo.org/facts/schoolstats/progcombinationsbyregion.cfm> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

²⁸² Gloria McDowell. Senior Head of the Latin American International Baccalaureate Office in Buenos Aires Telephone interview with author. 6 August 2009.

²⁸³ “Working language” refers to the language that the non-language courses and the Theory of Knowledge courses are taught in.

The International Baccalaureate in Latin America has long been the realm of the wealthy and the elite, a problem often cited by academics who see a disconnect between the IB's mission and its reality. Just this year in an effort to raise the standards of its public school education, the Ministry of Education in Ecuador decided to sponsor 22 IB Diploma Programmes in public schools across the country. "They are implementing it. The Ministry [of Education] decided to put one Diploma Programme in each province, so they are assuring that every province has at least one, and Quito and Guayaquil have more than one, in public sector high schools."²⁸⁴ This is an important change, and for one of the smaller countries in South America, it now offers the IB Diploma in more schools than any Latin American country except Argentina and Mexico, and is the only country to offer it in public schools.

History in Colombia

After Uruguay and Argentina, the third country in Latin America with a school that offered an IB diploma was Colombia, when Colegio Colombo Británico in Cali began the Programme in 1977.²⁸⁵ In Colombia all IB schools are private "elite" bilingual schools. There are currently 21 IB World Schools in Colombia offering one or more of the three IB programs. Four schools offer the PYP, four schools offer the MYP and 20 schools offer the Diploma Programme. Fourteen of the schools are located in Bogota (or the surrounding suburbs), two in Medellin, two in Cali, two in Barranquilla and one in Cartagena. All of the 21 schools offer the IB Diploma Programme with the exception of Colegio Britanico in Cartagena, which only offers the MYP and is the only school not in Bogota to offer either the PYP or MYP.²⁸⁶ Between 1992

²⁸⁴ Gloria McDowell. Senior Head of the Latin American International Baccalaureate Office in Buenos Aires Telephone interview with author. 6 August 2009.

²⁸⁵ IBO, "Colegio Colombo Británico" <http://www.ibo.org/school/000033/> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

²⁸⁶ Colegio Britanico de Cartagena offers the MYP. IBO, "Colegio Británico de Cartagena" <http://www.ibo.org/school/002365/> Accessed: 7 June 2009

and 2001, there were no new IB World schools, which is possibly attributable to the political situation in the country, as the trend does not extend into other Latin American countries during the same time period.

The IB in Colombia has recently experienced a rapid expansion, adding eight schools in the last three years, which is nearly a 50% increase. The schools’ “working language” favors Spanish, with 12 of the 21 using it to teach their non-language Theory of Knowledge courses. Every IB school in the country, including the German schools, offer English as a Group 1 or Group 2 language. The IB Diploma Programme was offered in Spanish for the first time in 1982, and thereafter Spanish-based Programs became available in Bogota and Medellin, including a switch from English to Spanish at the Colegio Anglo – Colombiano.²⁸⁷

Table 5.2: Schools in Colombia Offering the International Baccalaureate²⁸⁸

	<u>School Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Year</u> ²⁸⁹	<u>PYP</u>	<u>MYP</u>	<u>IB Diploma</u>	<u>Working Language:</u>
1.	Colegio Colombo Británico	Cali	1977			x	English
2.	Colegio Anglo – Colombiano	Bogotá	1980	x	x	x	Spanish*
3.	Fundación Colegio de Inglaterra	Bogotá	1981	x	x	x	English
4.	Gimnasio Los Cerros	Bogotá	1985			x	Spanish
5.	Gimnasio Los Alcázares	Medellín	1986			x	Spanish
6.	Aspaen Gimnasio Iragua	Bogotá	1989			x	Spanish
7.	Colegio Británico Internacional	Barranquilla	1990			x	English
8.	Colegio Internacional de Bogotá	Bogotá	1992			x	English
9.	Gimnasio del Norte	Bogotá	1992			x	Spanish

²⁸⁷ IBO, “Country Information For Colombia” <http://www.ibo.org/country/CO/index.cfm> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

²⁸⁸ Table created by the author by compiling the information found on the each school’s page on the IBO’s website, individually searched from the base site, IBO, “Country Information For Colombia” <http://www.ibo.org/country/CO/index.cfm> Accessed: 6 August 2009.

²⁸⁹ The year the school became an IB World School, in at least one of the three areas.

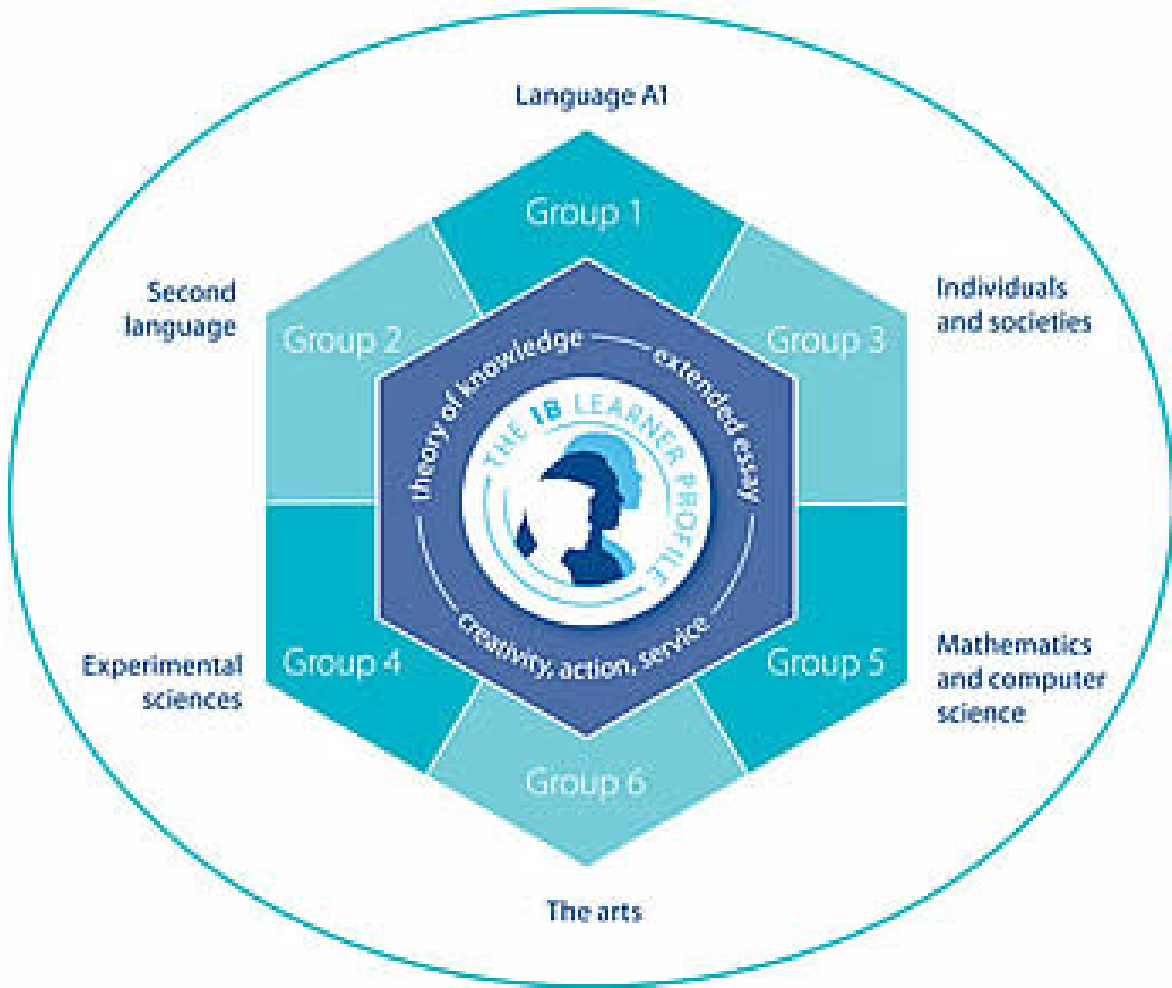
10.	Colegio Alemán	Barranquilla	2002			x	Spanish
11.	Deutsche Schule	Cali	2003			x	Spanish
12.	Buckingham School	Bogotá	2004			x	English
13.	Fundación Nuevo Marymount	Bogotá	2005			x	English
14.	CIEDI – Centro Integral de Educación Individualizado	Bogotá	2006	x	x	x	Spanish
15.	The Victoria School	Bogotá	2006	x		x	English
16.	Colegio Los Tréboles	Bogotá (Cundimarca)	2006			x	English
17.	Colegio Británico de Cartagena	Cartagena	2007		x		English
18.	Colegio Gran Bretaña	Bogotá	2008			x	Spanish
19.	Gimnasio Femenino	Bogotá	2008			x	Spanish
20	Gimnasio Campestre San Rafael	Bogotá (Cundimarca)	2008			x	Spanish
21	Colegio Alemán – Medellín	Medellín	2008			x	Spanish

*The working language changed from English to Spanish after 1982, the first year Spanish became available.

The IB Curriculum

Designed as a compromise between the various national systems and a way to modernize education, the curriculum of the IB Diploma is unique in several ways. It covers both the breadth wanted by some national systems by having six subjects, and the depth of the other systems by having three subjects taught at a High Level (HL), representing 240 teaching hours, and three taught at a Standard Level (SL), representing 150 teaching hours. Striving to provide both flexibility and required courses, the program requires students to take two languages, a humanities course (Individuals and Society), a science course, one of four math courses, and one of the Group 6 courses, which includes the arts, a second language B, or an extra humanities, science, or math class. Thus, there are five required areas, but the students have choices with

groups 2-6 and HL and SL for each class (assuming they are both offered). Groups 3-6 must be taught in English, French or Spanish.²⁹⁰



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Table 5.3: International Baccalaureate Course Offerings²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Students may request to take a fourth subject at a High Level. IBO, “IB Diploma Programme” <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/curriculum/> Accessed: 3 August 2009.

²⁹¹ IBO, “Diploma Programme curriculum” <http://ibo.org/diploma/curriculum/> Accessed: 12 March 2010.

²⁹² Information compiled by the author using information from Elisabeth Fox, “International Schools and the International Baccalaureate,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 55:1 (1985): 58-9 and IBO, *Schools’ Guide to the Diploma Programme* Cardiff: IBO, 2002, 9-11.

<p>Group 1 - Language A (first language, generally that native to the students of the country in which the school is located; in Colombia this is either Spanish or English depending on the school), including a study of world literature in translation from at least two language areas.</p>	<p>Group 2 - Language B (second modern language, distinguished from Language A in not requiring the same depth and breadth of understanding of cultural and historical contexts of language), or a second language at the level of language A.</p>	<p>Group 3 – Individuals and Society (one of the following options)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. History b. Geography c. Economics d. Philosophy e. Psychology f. Social anthropology g. Business studies
<p>Group 4 - Experimental Sciences (one of the following options)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Biology b. Chemistry c. Physics d. Physical science 	<p>Group 5 – Mathematics (one of the following options)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. High Level Mathematics b. Further mathematics (usually taken in addition to HL Math, as a group 6 elective) c. Mathematical methods SL d. Mathematical studies SL 	<p>Group 6 – The Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Plastic arts b. Music c. A classical language d. A second language B e. An additional option under 3, 4, or 5 f. Special syllabuses developed by IB schools g. Computer studies

“The adolescent of today is faced with a bewildering variety of choice; it is essential therefore that his education provide him with values and opportunities that enable him to choose wisely. The weight of available information in each discipline is such that an encyclopedic approach to education is not only outdated but inappropriate; learning how to learn has now become the prime function of school education.”²⁹³ Instead of focusing on the traditional way to educate, the founders of the IB focused on what a modern student would need to succeed at the university level and professionally throughout their lives. They determined modern students needed:

1. Priority of personal reflection over mere accumulation of knowledge
2. Training for independent work, and the practical application of knowledge

²⁹³Fox, Elisabeth, 58.

3. An international perspective in the approach to human problems
4. A link between academic and extra-curricular activities – the concept of educating ‘the whole person’²⁹⁴

Further flexibility has become available over time. Part of the Group 6 electives includes “Special syllabuses developed by IB schools,” meaning that if a school has a class it wants to teach it may create a syllabus and get approval by the IBO to teach the course. Many of the classes taught in the other groups began as special syllabus courses that over time have become established as part of the general IBO offerings, such as music, environmental studies and theater arts.²⁹⁵ The IBO has offered over 80 languages for Group 1 or Group 2 fulfillment.²⁹⁶ Schools are encouraged to teach history in the region that best suits their needs, such as “The Americas,” which helps schools meet national curriculum history requirements.²⁹⁷ Beyond its flexibility and the six-subject approach, the IB Diploma offers three features unique to the Programme: the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, the extended Essay, and Creativity, Action, Service (CAS).

Theory of Knowledge (TOK)

“Central to the IB educational philosophy was Edgar Faure’s conviction that learning how to learn is the key to meaningful education, and Jean Capelle’s insistence that students need to use the academic studies to form their minds in their own way.”²⁹⁸ At the core of IB’s dedication to this philosophy is the Theory of Knowledge course, which addresses two of the architects’ major concerns as they created the IB curriculum. It solves the problem of how to incorporate both theoretical and practical learning and helps inculcate students with the IB’s

²⁹⁴Hayden, 67.

²⁹⁵Mathews, 53.

²⁹⁶For a complete listing of the available languages, see Appendix B at the end of this thesis.

²⁹⁷Hayden, 70.

²⁹⁸Faure was the French Minister of Education in the 1960s and Capelle was the Dean of the University of Nancy. They worked together to reform the national French education system. Hayden, 67.

interdisciplinary approach by constantly working with students to develop their ability to connect ideas and see how courses tie together.

Based on inquiry, it addresses the question, “how do we know what we know?” It forces students to review how we as human beings acquire knowledge and what biases are inherent in the learning process. The course demonstrates the way these biases affect us and if we should retain, revise or reject them. As written in the IBO’s *A Basis for Practice: The Diploma Practice*, “It offers students and their teachers the opportunity to reflect critically on diverse ways of knowing and on areas of knowledge, and to consider the role and nature of knowledge in their own culture, in the cultures of others and in the wider world. It prompts students’ awareness of themselves as thinkers, encouraging them to become more acquainted with the complexity of knowledge and to recognize the need to act responsibly in an increasingly interconnected but uncertain world.”²⁹⁹

The TOK is broken down into several parts: 1. Language and logic, 2. Scientific activity and the formation of scientific concepts 3. Mathematics and reality, 4. The constitution of human science, 5. Historical knowledge, 6. The nature and basis of moral and political judgment, 7. The nature and basis of aesthetic judgment and 8. Opinion, faith, knowledge, truth.³⁰⁰ The TOK course is mandatory for all Diploma candidates and involves at least 100 hours of teaching time spanning the students’ two years.³⁰¹

Creativity, Action, Service (CAS)

Realizing that academics are not enough to develop students into well-rounded human beings, CAS was developed to involve extracurricular activities. It provides experience outside

²⁹⁹ IBO, *A Basis for Practice: The Diploma Programme*, Cardiff: IBO, 2002.
http://www.ibo.org/diploma/documents/basis_diploma.pdf Accessed: 3 August, 2009, 6.

³⁰⁰ Mathews, 52.

³⁰¹ IBO, *School’s Guide to the Diploma Programme*, Cardiff: IBO, 2002.
http://www.ibo.org/diploma/documents/schools_guide_diploma.pdf Accessed: 3 August, 2009, 3.

of the classroom in three areas: Creativity (the arts, theater, band, etc.), Action (sports, expeditions, etc) and Service (social and community service work). The three types of experience help students develop awareness of themselves and concern for others, as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other people.³⁰² Elisabeth Fox, once Academic Dean at the United Nations International School and current member of the IBO Council, states it best: “[I]f the IB claims to promote international understanding then IB schools must give students the means to learn through experience how to take responsible action in the service of others. It also recognizes the importance of physical activity and aesthetic experience in the life of the student, and in education of ‘the whole person.’”³⁰³

The program is especially well suited for use in Colombia, as all students are required to participate in at least 40 hours of community service in their final two years of high school. A teacher at each school is put in charge of creating interesting fulfilling CAS opportunities for IB students. Similarly, the teacher in charge of Colombian students’ mandatory service must get authorization by the Colombian Ministry of Education for particular service projects by demonstrating that they fulfill the national requirements.

Extended Essay

The original architects of the IB sought to afford kids an opportunity to explore what prominent German educator and father of the Outward Bound Program, Kurt Hahn, called their “great passion.”³⁰⁴ Thus, the International Baccalaureate requires that students write an Extended Essay, of approximately 4,000 words (about sixteen typed, double spaced pages) on a topic of the student’s choice, related to one of the taken subject areas. The Essay is written in the

³⁰² IBO, Schools Guide, 6,7.

³⁰³ Hayden, 69

³⁰⁴ Mathews, 49.

student's A1 or native language, undertaken in a student's own time, and is due several months before graduation in order to avoid time conflicts when studying for exams. The writing is guided by one of their teachers, usually depending on the subject chosen and assessed by an outside examiner. Originally students had to write an extended essay for each of their higher level classes, but this was whittled down to a single essay in 1974, as the work load was judged too intensive. The Extended Essay was designed to encourage students to develop research skills and apply the critical thinking they learn in the TOK class.³⁰⁵ "Writing an Extended Essay on a subject and topic of their choice affords students the experience of developing a personal academic interest creatively and autonomously, while at the same time practicing the self-discipline, including skills of planning and time management, that independent research of this kind demands."³⁰⁶

The grading scale for IB

The original designers of the IB decided that percentages were not a very precise way to qualify performance, as the extreme ends of the scale were not used, especially with essay questions. For example, the French *baccalauréat* exam graded on a 20-point scale. Students very rarely got above a 16 and the lower scores similarly reflected little use of the extremes. Using 100 points only exacerbated the problem. By using a seven-point scale, IB examiners were encouraged to give a seven to the best work and a one to the lowest, which they hoped would be less daunting in terms of frequency employed.³⁰⁷ In order to pass, students need to score a four or above.

³⁰⁵Peterson, 45.

³⁰⁶Hayden, 68.

³⁰⁷Mathews, 40

Borne of the different dominant national education programs with the idea of using the highest common denominator in order to accommodate all nations' higher education systems, the IB brought together some of the most influential educators from all over Europe and North America. The curriculum they created offers both flexibility and breadth with the High Level and Standard Level, as well as offering a wide variety of possible courses in each of the six groups. The commitment to serving one's fellow man was supported with the CAS idea while the theoretical aspect so important to the IB's French founders was incorporated in the Theory of Knowledge course. Several influential educators at the time sought to do more than teach students but rather begin the process of becoming life-long learners through independent research developed into the Extended Essay. Beginning with 29 children who first earned the IB Diploma at Ecolint in 1970, today IB is offered at 3,300 schools across the globe serving an estimated 750,000 students and continues to grow each year.³⁰⁸

Becoming an IB World School

Most schools choose to offer the IB Diploma first before the PYP or MYP. While this seems counterintuitive, as it might make sense to offer the PYP first, then add the MYP as these kids come of age, and finally the IB Diploma Programme as this first class of "IB kids" enter their final two years, this almost never happens. Usually after offering the IB Diploma for a few years the school decides whether to begin to offer the MYP and then the PYP, although both of those Programmes are far behind the Diploma in global numbers and both are much newer. There are three main stages involved in becoming an authorized IB World School: the feasibility study, candidate status, and the authorization visit. As most schools begin with the Diploma Programme, that is the one on which I will focus.

³⁰⁸ IBO, "The IB What You Should Know." <http://www.ibo.org/facts/21things/index.cfm> Accessed: 13 March 2009.

The Feasibility Study

At the beginning of the process a school familiarizes itself with the Programme it's interested in and the International Baccalaureate Organization in general. This is usually done through the IBO's website, where schools can not only begin educating themselves on the process but also buy and download various publications designed to make the process easier. Having determined that the mission and vision of the IB match the direction the school wants to go, the school fills out an Interested Schools/Intent to Apply form.³⁰⁹ Following the submission of this, a feasibility study is done in order to verify that the school has the resources necessary to implement the Programme. This involves an investigation of the school's finances and determining the school's commitment to allocating those resources towards IB. As one director at a school put it, the first step is "analysis of financial feasibility. If the school does not have the resources, there is no point in proceeding further."³¹⁰

After determining that the IB is something you want to do, and something you have the resources for, the next step is planning a professional development session for your administration and staff. In Colombia this is often a problem because the trainings are costly, as is travel within the country, as overland travel takes an extremely long time. This stage ends with the school filing their Diploma Programme application form part A. The application stipulates that the schools do a self-assessment, similar to the Self-Assessment of Readiness for Accreditation by SACS/AdvancED.

Candidate Status

³⁰⁹ IBO, "Interested Schools Form" <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/interestedform.cfm> Accessed: 4 August 2009.

³¹⁰ Seve, Brian. Director, Santa Marta Bilingual School. Message to the author. 21 July 2009. E-mail.

The next step is candidate status, which indicates that you have completed the application form Part A. At this point the school is a ‘candidate school,’ which as clearly stated in the application, “gives no guarantee that authorization [to offer the IB] will be granted.”³¹¹ The teachers and administrators attend the training planned during the previous stage and begin professional development designed to assist them successfully implement the IB. If held within Colombia, these trainings are usually held in the capital, Bogota where two-thirds of all the schools in the country are located. According to a director at a Colombian IB school, many of the trainings are held outside of the country, in other countries in the Americas, such as the United States, Mexico, Peru or Argentina.³¹² The school and its employees at this point have access to the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC), which provides curriculum guides, teacher support materials, discussion forums and support for special education, librarians, etc.³¹³ At the end of this phase the school files the application form Part B, which requires information regarding its master timetable, financial planning information, plans for the CAS, the Diploma Programme Coordinator designate, proposed IB Diploma Programme (subjects offered and who will teach them), and a course sequencing chart. Basically, the school needs to have everything prepared to receive the authorization visit, and to begin offering the IB should they be approved.

Authorization visit

The IBO trains practitioners of the Diploma Programme to conduct authorization visits and be members of teams. These practitioners are usually coordinators or the heads of other IB schools in the region. The IBO appoints a team leader and two team members (three if the

³¹¹IBO, Diploma Programme School Authorization, <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/authorization/> Accessed: 4 August 2009

³¹²Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Britanico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009.

³¹³IBO, Online Curriculum Centre, <http://occ.ibo.org/ibis/occ/guest/home.cfm> Accessed: 4 August 2009.

school is exceptionally large). The candidate school pays for travel (including visas) and accommodation of the visiting team.³¹⁴ The visits usually last two days, but may be longer depending on the size of the school.³¹⁵ The team speaks with school staff, parents and students and inspects school facilities, resources, instructional materials, and possibly classes. During the visit the candidate school needs to show that they have the required teachers, administrative staff, legal status, and financial viability to offer the Diploma. They also need to demonstrate that their potential Diploma teachers have been through IBO-approved professional development, among other things.³¹⁶ The team files an authorization visit report with the home offices, which makes professional judgments about the school and indicates where the school needs to improve. At this point, the school will either be authorized to offer the IB, denied authorization, or have authorization postponed.³¹⁷ The time between these stages can vary widely, and just moving from part A to part B candidate status is usually at least one year, and often two or three.³¹⁸

The British School in Cartagena: A Tale of the IB Gone Wrong

The British School in Cartagena (COLBRICA) began as a pre-school named Mi Pequeño Mundo (My Little World) founded by Maria Nelly Mendoza with the intention of offering a better quality education in the El Cabrero neighborhood. The school began offering classes in February, 1979 to a group of 40 children. Mendoza soon gained the support of three more key individuals, Elvira Pacheco de Gilchrist, Cristina Mendoza de Camacho y Virginia Angulo de Pacheco, and their students increased to 170. The four founders moved the school to Bocagrande (an affluent part of Cartagena) and in 1983, expanded into a primary school, and

³¹⁴IBO, School Guide, 6.

³¹⁵IBO, School Guide, 4.

³¹⁶IBO, School Guide, 2.

³¹⁷IBO, School Guide, 16.

³¹⁸IBO, "Interested Schools Form" <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/interestedform.cfm> Accessed: 4 August 2009.

moved to calendar B.³¹⁹ In 1984, with the help of the Colombo Británico (the first school in Colombia to offer the IB Diploma), the school changed its name to the Cartagena British School and began implementing a more international education and a bilingual program. The school graduated its first senior class in 1994.³²⁰

In 2007 the school began offering the International Baccalaureate Organization's Middle Years Programme (MYP) for grades six through ten. The school obliges all graduating seniors to take the national exam (ICFES), the U.S. Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the U.S. College Board's International English Examination (TOEFL). The younger students take the University of Cambridge Exams throughout their schooling careers: in second grade, the STARTERS exam, in 4th grade the MOVERS exam, in 6th grade the FLYERS, in 8th grade the Preliminary English Test (PET), and in 10th the First Certificate in English (FCE).³²¹

The school has 618 students, ranging from pre-school to twelfth grade, 552 of which are Colombian nationals. Nearly all graduates, an estimated 99%, go to college. In 2008 only three percent of the graduating seniors planned to go to school outside of Colombia.³²² The school in 2008 ranked as the highest on the ICFES in the city.³²³ Approximately half of the instructors from the school come from outside of Colombia.³²⁴

³¹⁹Colombia has two separate schedules; calendar A which is in session roughly from February to November and a calendar B which works on a more North American schedule of August to early June.

³²⁰Colegio Británico de Cartagena, "Historia" <http://www.colbritanico.com/historia.html> Accessed: 23 July 2009.

³²¹Colegio Británico de Cartagena, "Información para el Año Académico 2009-2010" http://www.colbritanico.com/info_matriculas.html#examenes Accessed: 12 March 2010.

³²²Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Britanico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009.

³²³Dinero Magazine, "Los Mejores Colegios" 07 November 2008 <http://www.dinero.com/noticias-caratula/mejores-colegios/54048.aspx> Accessed: 24 July 2009.

³²⁴Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Britanico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009.

According to the school's director, Brian Seve, they sought to become an IB World school for three reasons. 1. To raise academic standards, 2. As a marketing tool, and 3. "To be part of an international education programme and so raise the sights of the students and teachers beyond the solely Colombian horizon."³²⁵ Three short years later, according to current director Sofia Camacho de Covo, the school is considering dropping the program. The main problems according to her are the costs and the difficulty getting teachers trained.

The MYP is designed to prepare kids for the IB diploma. We're not moving in that direction. It's too expensive. Our students here cannot afford to pay those exams. So actually we're thinking of moving into a different program, this might be our last MYP year.³²⁶

COLBRICA is the only IB school in the country that does not offer the Diploma Programme, demonstrating why schools usually chose to do the Diploma Programme first and why offering the MYP without the Diploma is ill advised. The students do not want to make the sacrifice if they do not see the benefit. "[I]t doesn't mean anything to them. Because once they finish their 10th grade year, they don't get anything; it's as if they didn't do anything. They can't get into the university with that diploma, it's not worth anything in the country. So it's basically useless for them."³²⁷ This would of course be different if the school was offering a full Diploma, as it would then serve the purpose of preparing them for that Programme.

When previous director, Brian Seve, arrived at the school, they had been talking for a long time about getting authorized by the IB, but he was the principal who actually did it. He

³²⁵Seve, Brian. Director, Santa Marta Bilingual School. Message to the author. 21 July 2009. E-mail.

³²⁶Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Britanico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009.

³²⁷Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Britanico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009.

had worked at IB schools in the past, including teaching High Level and Standard Level Physics and quickly began going through the necessary steps. While he said he would definitely recommend the Diploma Programme, he would recommend the MYP “with reservations.” On the other hand, Seve went on to say that he feels the Diploma Programme’s greatest purpose is to prepare kids for the university, which is the one area where Camacho de Covo felt the MYP worked.³²⁸

“I think it helps them prepare in terms of investigation and doing research and getting themselves into some sort of project that leads to an investigation and teaches them. We have adopted a subject in our school, which is Approaches to Learning as a Subject. We’re teaching giving them guidelines to investigate and types of investigation, so I think that it will be very good for them, when they get to the university they will be able to write their own projects and evaluate their own education. So I think it is a good preparation for college in that sense.”³²⁹

Certainly there are doubts about the IB Diploma Programme and the newer Middle Years Programme and Primary Years Programme, and for good reason. The MYP and PYP are designed to prepare kids for the Diploma, but are structured very differently. There is no outside grading, no standardized curriculum, and no final goal, other than the distant IB Diploma, which Colegio Britanico de Cartagena at least, has no plans on offering. The IB Latin American Office offered this advice. “For an established K-12 school, my advice is you start with Diploma, and you design your curriculum backwards. You know where you have to finish. If you are a newer school, you start with PYP and you add on.”³³⁰

³²⁸Seve, Brian. Director, Santa Marta Bilingual School. Message to the author. 21 July 2009. E-mail.

³²⁹Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Britanico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009.

³³⁰McDowell, Gloria.

Benefits of the International Baccalaureate

So why do the International Baccalaureate? How does it benefit the school? A higher number of the world's population goes to university now than ever. This in turn allows the best universities to not only be more selective on admissions, but also more rigorous in their academics. In order to prepare students for university life in today's environment, schools have to be more prepared than ever to offer a quality curriculum. Part of that is constant testing and self-revision. The IB Diploma Programme, with its system of outside marking, preventing any possibility of a teacher 'fudging' grades, helps provide this. Students' test scores are ranked yearly against the national and international average, demanding reflection on school practices. When asked if he thought the students at the unaccredited Santa Marta Bilingual School (SMBS) could handle a program as rigorous as the International Baccalaureate, one principal answered, "They would have no choice but to work harder. The Diploma is not a Programme solely for genius kids, but you do need to be academically rigorous to obtain the Diploma."³³¹

The primary benefit of the IB Programme is that it prepares students for university level classes. "The 233 students who had received a 5 on the Calculus BC [Advanced Placement] exam and the 16 who received credit through the International Baccalaureate exam performed much better than the average student in 18.02."³³² 18.02 is a multivariable calculus course at the University of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This demonstrates that students who go through the IB Programme, at least at MIT, performed better in this course.

There are several other benefits to becoming certified with IB, according to the IBO, which deserve mention as it illustrates what comes with authorization and the "IB World School"

³³¹ Seve, Brian. Director, Santa Marta Bilingual School. Message to the author. 21 July 2009. E-mail.

³³² Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "Appendix III-A: Response to Questions in the Charge Concerning Advanced Placement Policy" <http://web.mit.edu/faculty/reports/pnrap/report4.html> Accessed: 05 August 2009.

label. A school has access to their “world-class” curriculum, which is frequently updated. Teachers have access to the afore-mentioned online curriculum centre (OCC), which connects them to the 30,000-strong IB teaching community, with chat rooms and forums for idea exchange. The IBO requires schools to self examine every five years, occasionally with external reviews if deemed necessary. But most importantly, especially in the context of the coast perhaps, is the use of “The IB World School name to indicate a school’s unique international status and involvement with the IB.”³³³ This is important because it demonstrates to the parents that the school is offering a high quality curriculum that is frequently peer reviewed. All of the schools in this study receive nearly all their operational budget from tuition, making competitiveness very important.

Getting Students into University

In the United States most parents focus on “an education that would facilitate the admission of their students into the universities of their choice.”³³⁴ How does the IB program get students into college? Over time the IB has worked to get its diploma recognized by universities across the globe. Beginning with those European countries coming out of the Sevrés Conference in 1967, there are now 2546 universities in 75 countries that recognize the IB Diploma.³³⁵

Table 5.4 Fall 2002 University Acceptance Rates³³⁶

University	All Applicants	IB Applicants
Harvard University	11%	14.4%

³³³IBO, “Annual School Fee”, <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/services/annual/index.cfm> Accessed: 4 August 2009.

³³⁴Hayden, 65.

³³⁵IBO, “University Recognition Directory” <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/recognition/directory/index.cfm> Accessed: 5 August 2009.

³³⁶Mathews, 217

United States Naval Academy	11.67%	42.9%
Columbia University	12%	18.3%
Stanford University	12.6%	16.9%
Yale University	13%	19.5%
Brown University	17%	20.8%
Dartmouth College	20.7%	35.1%
California Institute of Technology	21%	40.7%
Washington University St. Louis	23.5%	68.5%
University of California at Berkeley	24%	47.6%
Northwestern University	32.9%	57.7%
University of Notre Dame	34.2%	41.4%
College of William and Mary	37%	55%
University of Virginia	38.1%	63.3%
Emory University	42%	82.1%
University of Maryland	43.5%	87%
University of Michigan at Ann Arbor	49%	73.4%
Reed College	55%	90.9%
Brigham Young University	60%	86.2%
Baylor University	81%	100%

In Colombia, the IBO website lists thirteen of the county's most prestigious universities as accepting the IB Diploma. Other prestigious universities have many more set policies for admissions. The Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, for example, is one the most prestigious universities on the coast. They have a very clear admission policy regarding IB Diploma graduates. The first advantage for IB Diploma holders cited on their admissions web page is automatic admission, without any accompanying admission tests. The university also gives

mathematics credit to incoming students.³³⁷ It is however, not on the IBO’s list of universities, due to additional acceptance variables.

Table 5.5: Colombian Universities accepting the IB Diploma for Admissions³³⁸

1. Universidad de los Andes	8. Escuela de Ingenierías de Antioquia
2. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana	9. Politécnico Grancolombiano
3. Universidad Externado de Colombia	10. Universidad Antonio Nariño
4. Universidad de la Sabana	11. Universidad EAFIT
5. Pontificia Universidad Bolivariana	12. Instituto de Ciencias de la Salud
6. Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano	13. Colegio de Estudios Superiores de
7. Universidad del Rosario	Administración

The Universidad de los Andes is a top-level private university in the Colombia and is viewed as the most prestigious to outgoing seniors in my discussions with students at these schools. The list does not include however, the top three public schools in the country, the Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Bogota), the Universidad de Antioquia (Medellin), and the Universidad del Valle (Cali).³³⁹ These universities are known for their stringent admissions requirements, and are three of the only universities in the nation that do not review the results of

³³⁷It should be noted that the University also only gives college credit for math for Advanced Placement Classes, which is considerably different than in the US where students frequently receive several classes worth of credit in a range of subjects for both the IB and the AP. Universidad del Norte, “Current Programs of International Baccalaureate” http://www.uninorte.edu.co/admission/admission_undergraduated/secciones.asp?ID=1 Accessed: 5 August 2009.

³³⁸IBO, “Country Information for Colombia” <http://www.ibo.org/country/CO/index.cfm> Accessed: 5 August 2009.

³³⁹This statement is based on the Instituto Colombiano para el Desarrollo de la Ciencia y la Tecnología (Colciencias)’s yearly rankings of Latin American Universities based on the number of scientific papers published in peer-refereed publications. Thus these numbers are skewed heavily towards Universities with a strong science program. Instituto Colombiano para el Desarrollo de la Ciencia y la Tecnología, “Ranking De Instituciones de Investigacion de Latinoamérica” http://investigacion.universia.net/html_inv/ri3/ri3/jsp/params/pais/fc.html Accessed: 5 August 2009.

the ICFES exit exam when considering admissions. They do, however, invite the best students in the country to take their entrance exams free of charge.³⁴⁰

Getting the Students Credit in University

While the Universidad del Norte may only accept one IB math class for credit, the table below demonstrates that for a North American university such as the University of British Columbia, many more classes are accepted. Students entering the University of British Columbia, a well regarded school in Canada, who perform well on the IB Diploma could easily begin their university education with enough credits to qualify as sophomores before setting foot on campus.

Table 5.6: University Credit for IB Courses, University of British Columbia, Vancouver³⁴¹

Subject	Minimum IB HL score	UBC course (including credit values)
Biology	6	BIOL 100-Level (7) with exemption from BIOL111, BIOL121, BIOL140
Business and Management	5	Comm 100 (3)
Chemistry	6	CHEM 121 (4)
Greek:	5	GREK 100 (6)
Latin:	5	LATN 100 (6)
Computer Science	6	CPSC 100-level (3)
Economics	5	ECON101 (3), ECON 102 (3)
English Language A	5	ENGL 100-level (6)
French A or B	5	FREN 122 (3), FREN 123 (3)
Geography	6	GEOG 100-level (6)
German	5	GERM 100 (3), GERM 100 (3)
History	5	HIST 100-level (6)
Information Technology in a Global Society	6	CPSC 1 st (3)
Islamic History	5	RELG 100-level (6)
Italian B	5	ITAL 101, (3), ITAL 102 (3)
Mathematics	6	MATH 100 (3), MATH 101 (3)

³⁴⁰Universidad Nacional de Colombia, “Mejores Bachilleres” <http://www.admisiones.unal.edu.co/es/pregrado/13.html> Accessed: 5 August 2009.

³⁴¹University of British Columbia, “International Baccalaureate” <https://you.ubc.ca/ubc/vancouver/ib.ezc> Accessed: 5 August 2009.

Philosophy	5	PHIL 100 (6)
Physics	6	PHYS 100-level, exempt from PHYS101
Portuguese	5	PORT 2 nd (6)
Psychology	5	PSYC 100 (6)
Social Anthropology	5	ANTH 100 (3), ANTH 100-level (3)
Spanish A	5	SPAN 220 (6)
Spanish B	5	SPAN 201 (3), SPAN 202 (3)
Theory of Knowledge	A or B	PHIL 100-level (6)
Visual Arts	5	VISA 182 (3), VISA 183 (3)

Negatives of the IB

There are a number of negatives to becoming IB certified, many of which were noted while discussing COLBRICA's problems with the Middle Years Programme. The programs are very expensive, much more so annually than other internationally recognized programs, such as SACS accreditation. Many of the schools do not offer the full Diploma Programme, and a majority of graduating seniors do not attempt or attain it when it is offered. Trainings are mandatory yet difficult to arrange, and the IB continues to fight accusations of being Eurocentric and globalizing.

The Santa Marta Bilingual School has a monthly tuition of around \$270.³⁴² This leads to a yearly income of a little over 2.1 million dollars. Seventy three percent of this goes towards staff salary, and the rest is divided up in administration, maintenance fees, and financing facility improvements.³⁴³ The school has very little money left over, around \$25,000 dollars in 2009, which is used as a buffer for unexpected fees such as accidents, lawsuits, etc. Besides the initial expenses of seeking IB authorization, schools also continue to pay nearly 10,000 dollars a year to continue offering the Programme, and more for subject fees and exam assessment fees.³⁴⁴ The

³⁴² All figures are based on 2009 tuition rates, and converted to dollars using a rate of 1 American dollar to 2,000 Colombian pesos, the exchange rate on 07 February 2010.

³⁴³ All information concerning the SMBS's finances comes from Fabiana Tribin, Santa Marta Bilingual School chief financial officer. Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009. For a full explanation and exact figures, see Appendix C.

³⁴⁴ IBO, "Annual School Fee" <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/services/annual/index.cfm> Accessed: 11 April 2010.

exam fees are normally paid by the student sitting for an exam, but these are also very expensive for parents at these second tier bilingual schools who tend to be of a lower socioeconomic level than those at the most prestigious schools in the region.

The IB is a voluntary program for students and very few students receive the IB Diploma annually. Less than 40,000 students worldwide attained it in May 2009. In the Americas (North and South) only 53% of IB schools offer the full Diploma Programme, often because it is new and they do not yet offer enough IB courses to complete it or they only offer the MYP or PYP Programme³⁴⁵. Where the Diploma is offered, only 45% of students worldwide attempt to earn it. In the Americas this number drops to 34%. Annually around 80% of these pass.³⁴⁶ This means that of students in the Americas who can attempt the full Diploma, only about 28% successfully do so. Colombia registered 214 students for the full Diploma in May 2009.³⁴⁷ Assuming that the global 80% success rate holds true, this means that less than 180 students in Colombia graduated with the IB Diploma, from 21 schools, or around 9 per school. Often students only seek certificates for completing individual IB courses, but many of the universities want students to have attained the full diploma and are less likely to give college credit or preferential admission to students who did not. This is a problem because it means that although a school may become authorized to offer the IB, only the best students tend to utilize the opportunity.

One thing that is looked at during the authorization visit is whether or not the teachers charged with teaching IB courses have received IBO-approved professional development courses. Both principals interviewed for this paper cited this as an enormous problem due to the difficulty

³⁴⁵ IBO, "The IB Diploma Programme Statistical Bulletin: May 2009 Examination Session." <http://www.ibo.org/facts/statbulletin/dpstats/documents/May2009Statisticalbulletin.pdf> Accessed: 14 March 2010, 7.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, 8.

³⁴⁷ Ibid, 26. They registered 614 but most of these students registered for certificates, with around 33% registering for the full diploma.

in getting these trainings, and the high cost of sending teachers to Bogotá where they are infrequently held.³⁴⁸ This creates a significant problem for school budgets, especially with the high turnover common at elite bilingual schools.

Closing

So when a school is contemplating the IB, they have to take into account the difficulty of training teachers, the few number of students that are likely to use the Programme and the high annual fees. A school must also look at the possible advantages that come from introducing the International Baccalaureate. The IB Diploma prepares students for university level study in any country in the world and is accepted almost everywhere. It offers an innovative curriculum that includes foreign language, science and the arts along with its three innovative additions, the Extended Essay, the Theory of Knowledge course, and the CAS. It has higher academic standards than the national curriculum, which needs to take into account the low-income public schools, while the IB does not. The IB evaluation system is certainly more modern than the multiple-choice based national ICFES exam, focusing on global awareness, thoughtful self-expression and analysis. Perhaps not as important to school boards but important to the social betterment of the country, the IB also helps students see beyond their national borders into a world that is growing smaller each year.

Conclusions

As Colombia's economy develops and the middle class continues to grow, there is a growing demand for private bilingual education that is seen as prestigious and an avenue to

³⁴⁸ Sofia Camacho de Covo, Director, Colegio Britanico de Cartagena (COLBRICA). Telephone interview with author. 21 July 2009. Seve, Brian. Director, Santa Marta Bilingual School. Message to the author. 21 July 2009. E-mail.

socioeconomic advancement. With an increase in demand comes an increase in supply; more and more “bilingual schools” are popping up every year. Mirroring the problem in the United States in the early 1900’s, which was the impetus for the creation of accrediting agencies, a proliferation of schools without any standardizing agency judging their level of education causes schools that are educating well to seek out recognition. In the United States, they decided to create the various accrediting agencies to differentiate schools that met certain criteria from those that did not. These same agencies offer that same service to schools in Colombia today, and have recently made some changes to their accrediting procedures to make it easier for Colombian schools offering a high level of education to get accreditation. This is evidenced by the recent approval of two schools (Marymount Barranquilla and Altamira) after a 40-year period with no new accreditations on the coast.

The accrediting agencies have a set of standards that all schools must meet, and continue to uphold in order to remain accredited. The standards regulate areas such as teacher and administrator qualifications, allocation of planning time, mandatory professional development, student teacher ratio, and number of support personnel based on enrollment. The accreditation process is long, usually around six years, and begins with an application. With the help of an advisor they go through process involving: a self-readiness assessment, a Readiness Visit, Candidate status, and a Quality Assurance Review team visit. If a school fails to maintain these standards they are usually put on probation, and if they continue to operate below expectations, can lose their accreditation.

When a student graduates from an American accredited high school, they earn what amounts to two diplomas, Colombian and American. However, in my discussions with admissions officers at the University of Kansas, a degree from an accredited school is no more

valuable than a degree from any other high school that is approved by the Colombian Ministry of Education and provides a college preparatory education, and both are looked at in accordance with relevant standardized test scores.³⁴⁹ So, the provision of opportunities and preparation to take these standardized tests, which is certainly practiced by elite coastal schools, is more important than the American diploma. Receiving American accreditation also provides access to modern teaching methods, theories, workshops, and an international support community of educators. It gives Colombian schools access to innovation, the main reason mentioned by one school for seeking accreditation.

Receiving American accreditation is not the only way to demonstrate superiority over all the new private bilingual schools. The International Baccalaureate is the most rapidly expanding international curriculum in the world. Colombia is not immune to its popularity and, although the first Colombian school to offer the IB Programme was in 1977, over half of the nation's 21 IB schools were authorized in the last eight years. Similar to American accreditation, IB Programme authorization is difficult and is broken down into three main stages, the feasibility study, candidate status, and an authorization visit.

The authorization visit for the IB is different than the SACS Quality Assurance Review team visit. The former focuses mainly on whether the school has the required teachers, administrative staff, legal status and financial viability to offer the Diploma. The standards are looser, which allows for some flexibility, a plus for very diverse international schools. For example, a foreign teacher does not need to be certified in their home country, but they do have to have attended IBO-approved professional development. This is a problem, however, as these

³⁴⁹ Daphne Johnston. University of Kansas Associate Director of International Undergraduate Admissions. Personal interview with author held in Lawrence, Kansas, 11 August 2009.

are rarely offered in Colombia, and if so, are almost always in Bogotá, adding to travel and lodging costs for coastal schools.

The International Baccalaureate also provides a second diploma in addition to a Colombian one. However, unlike an American diploma, students who receive the IB Diploma receive preferred admission at many universities around the world. However, an important difference is that all students who graduate from an U.S.-accredited school receive an American diploma, while the IB Diploma is a voluntary Programme for students at IB schools and a demanding one that very few students finish. In the Americas, only 28% of students who attempt the IB Diploma pass and many of the schools that offer the IB do not even offer a full Diploma Programme. While the IB Diploma may be more valuable, it is a realistic possibility for a very small portion of the school's student body.

IB Programme schools frequently offer courses for college credit to students who either complete the diploma or pass certain courses with a high score. American accredited schools do the same in their International Advanced Placement courses, but the AP Program is not offered at all accredited schools and should not be considered part of the standard curriculum at these schools. College credit courses are available at all IB schools.

Both of these programs are becoming more popular in Colombia in recent years, pushed by more established schools' need to differentiate themselves from the influx of new schools and the demands of top universities. Which program better prepares students for university at the highest level? Which program commands the most prestige? The answer to these questions depends on the place. On the Colombian Caribbean Coast, families and teachers, for longstanding geopolitical reasons, favor North American English and curriculums. While IB

schools often teach American English, they are still seen as European despite that over half of IB schools are in the US.

Looking at economics, the IB is much more cost prohibitive than American accreditation, not just in the initial stages but in yearly fees, exam costs, etc. This is an enormous problem for many schools. The Santa Marta Bilingual School is a fairly average second tier elite private bilingual school and their principal acknowledged that without a significant increase in tuition costs, offering the IB was impossible. Both IB authorization and U.S.-accreditation are very expensive initially, as a school gets its facilities up to standard and puts in all the extra hours necessary to face an authorization or QAR team visit (which the school has to pay for). The difference lies in the years following the authorization, as a school pays a very small fee to the American accrediting agency, and nearly \$10,000 a year to the IB, on top of exam assessment and subject fees. The IB exam fees are normally paid by the families and not the school, and as more middle class families seek this level of education, such fees can break their budgets.

In any market where a proliferation of options becomes an issue, the most well established schools always seek to separate themselves, demonstrated in the growth of both the IB and the AP programs at upper-level schools in the United States. The disparity in costs in Colombia allows for the possibility that the more established schools will begin to move away from accreditation and towards the IB in an effort to differentiate from the newcomers to the world of elite bilingual instruction. The newer schools would not have the means to imitate them in adopting the IB, for the time being at least.

Both the IB and American accrediting agencies have faced charges of cultural imperialism, acculturation, and globalization at the cost of national identity. The veracity of

such charges is somewhat subjective, beyond the scope of this thesis, and affect both types of schools equally anyway. To a certain degree both programs result in some acculturation, as they encourage students to take a more global perspective, but expanding one's perspective does not have to come at the detriment to national ones.

The ability for a school in Colombia to offer an American high school diploma is very attractive to area parents. While most of the graduates do not immediately enroll in U.S. universities, many do go abroad for graduate studies, an area still underdeveloped in Colombia. The parents' perception is that this is beneficial to those students. While I disagree that an American diploma is more influential than good grades at a top-level school or decent ACT/SAT/GRE scores, the U.S. diploma is treasured most by parents.

One major advantage of seeking U.S. accreditation is the access that schools have to better teachers. North American teachers want to teach at accredited schools, as it benefits their prospects of reentering the job market in their home countries. Many administrators in North America do not consider teaching at unaccredited institutions to be teaching at all. Also, the network of accredited schools makes it very easy to transfer among them, even between countries, as long as one performs well. This is not to say that IB schools have less qualified teachers, just that they have to work harder to find them (the IB maintains a webpage of available IB jobs but it is poor substitute for the accredited school network). This becomes even more relevant considering the difficulty Colombian schools have in getting IB teacher training. On the other hand, U.S. accredited teachers command the highest salaries.

In conclusion, I feel that the IB Programme will prove to be less popular than American accreditation in Colombia. It demands more work, introspection, and thoughtfulness on the part of the students. It does an excellent job of creating life-long learners as it professes, and should a

student complete the IB Diploma Programme, offers a much greater range of options at the university level. It also offers college credit at many schools, even for students who choose not to pursue the Diploma. It is in my opinion, the far better program. However, if I were a private bilingual school of limited means on Colombia's Caribbean Coast, such as the Santa Marta Bilingual School, I would choose American accreditation over the IB.

The International Baccalaureate is cost prohibitive for most schools. The only schools offering an IB Diploma Programme on Colombia's coast are affiliated with European nations who help defray its costs. Tuition is generally higher in the country's interior, so perhaps it is a more reasonable hope there, but considering the relatively low income of most *costeño* schools, the IB is simply too expensive.

Secondly, the IB is a largely unknown quantity among the *costeño* elite, the importance of which cannot be understated. In a free spirited beach culture, appearance is frequently valued more than substance. The IB has greater substance, but the parents do not know what it is, and are frequently reticent to be convinced of obscure academic goals. The three most prestigious schools on the coast all have American accreditation, and many parents aspire to have their children in similar institutions.

Both programs have rigorous standards for accreditation or authorization and face near identical charges of cultural imperialism. Both options also offer access to modern teaching methodology, theory and policy. Thus, the only other relevant measure is their ability to hire experienced, qualified teachers, and in this area American accredited schools have the clear upper hand, although those teachers tend to expect a higher salary, which needs to be considered.

Ultimately, the IB schools offer a better curriculum, but the IB Programme comes in second place to American accredited schools on Colombia's Caribbean Coast because of differential costs, program perception and access to a pool of qualified teachers.

Abbreviations:

AP – Advanced Placement

CAS – Creativity, Action, Service the International Baccalaureate’s extracurricular initiative

COJOWA – Colegio Jorge Washington, George Washington School in Cartagena

COLBRICA – Colegio Británico de Cartagena (British School in Cartagena)

DANE - *Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística*, Colombian National Statistics Administration Department

FER - *Fondos Educativos Regionales*, Regional Educational Funds

FCE - First Certificate in English Cambridge Certificate

GCE – Cambridge Overseas General Certificate of Education

HL – High Level International Baccalaureate Class

IB – International Baccalaureate

IBO – International Baccalaureate Organisation

ICFES – Superior Colombian Institute for the Development of Higher Education - *Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación*

ISES - International Schools Examination Syndicate

MYP - Middle Years Programme, International Baccalaureate

PET - Preliminary English Test

PYP – Primary Years Programme, International Baccalaureate

SAT - U.S. Scholastic Aptitude Test

SENA - *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje*- Vocational National Service Program

SMBS – Santa Marta Bilingual School

ST – Standard Level International Baccalaureate Class

TOEFL - U.S. College Board’s International English Examination

TOK – The International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge course

UNIS - United Nations International School

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Appendix A: Self Assessment Document for schools seeking Accreditation.

School Name _____

School Address _____

READINESS for AdvancED ACCREDITATION

A Self-Assessment of Readiness for Accreditation

Purpose: This tool is designed to help schools assess their readiness for accreditation by examining the school’s practices in relation to the research-based conditions, core tasks, and effective practices of continuously improving schools and districts (NSSE, 2004). This research forms the basis of the *AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools*. By self-assessing against the research, the school can determine its capacity to meet the AdvancED standards. A matrix detailing the link between the research base and the standards can be found in the appendix to the standards (http://www.advanced.org/accreditation/standards/advanced_school_standards.pdf).

Directions Part A: Review the five necessary conditions (listed below) of improving schools. Use the rating scale described in the key to assess the degree to which your school is engaged in the stated condition.

Key:

- 1 Not Evident Little or no evidence exists
- 2 Emerging Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
- 3 Operational Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
- 4 Highly Functional Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented**

Necessary Conditions	1	2	3	4
<p>Effective Leadership</p> <p>The leadership decisions and practices support the vision for student learning.</p>				
<p>Policies and Practices</p> <p>The school has polices and practices in place that support improvement efforts.</p>				
<p>Resources and Support Systems</p> <p>The school has the human, technology, and material resources to support improvement efforts.</p>				

<p>Quality Teachers</p> <p>The recruitment, placement, and professional development of teachers are aligned with the school’s vision for student learning.</p>				
<p>Quality Information</p> <p>An information system which collects, manages, and uses information to support the school’s vision is in place in the school.</p>				

Directions, Part B: Each category below contains the three core tasks of continuously improving schools. Under each core task are listed the research-based effective practices of continuously improving schools that relate to that task. Examine your school’s practices in relation to the research findings listed. Use the rating scale described in the key to assess your practices and determine the level that best describes your school’s implementation of the stated practices.

Key:

- 1 Not Evident Little or no evidence exists
- 2 Emerging Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
- 3 Operational Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
- 4 Highly Functional Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented**

Please respond to the focus question at the conclusion of each section.

Core Task #1: Ensure Desired Results				
In our school, we <u>expect and ensure desired results</u> by:	1	2	3	4
1. Implementing a vision for student learning through goals and strategies				
2. Maintaining high expectations for student achievement				
3. Maintaining a focus on improving student learning that permeates all levels of the school				
4. Acting on a compelling, shared belief that, collectively, staff and other stakeholders can impact the desired results of the school				
How does the school communicate and maintain a focus on results?				

In our school, we effectively <u>monitor performance</u> by:	1	2	3	4
5. Using data to inform decision-making about teaching and learning				
6. Using a comprehensive assessment system to provide feedback for improvement in instructional practices and student performance				
7. Using classroom-based assessments to provide robust measures of students' academic, cognitive, and metacognitive skills				
8. Identifying performance targets, indicators, and measures for comparing and improving effectiveness				
9. Taking appropriate and timely action to improve areas of identified needs				
How does the school use data to guide improvement and to monitor the results of efforts to improve?				

Core Task #2: Improve Teaching and Learning				
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In our school, we <u>support student learning</u> by:	1	2	3	4
10. Maintaining school-wide expectations for student learning that reflect academic, cognitive, and metacognitive skills				
11. Delivering on the expectations for student learning through a coherent and rigorous curriculum				
12. Aligning an assessment system with curriculum that is enacted through instruction				
13. Supporting the equitable opportunity of students to learn through individualization and differentiation				
14. Providing student support services and special programs to optimize individual student learning				
15. Supporting a student learning community that includes student involvement				
16. Involving families and the community in supporting children as learners				
How does the school provide and ensure support for student learning?				

In our school, we <u>maximize teacher effectiveness</u> by:	1	2	3	4
17. Using instructional strategies that provide students with focus, feedback, and sufficient opportunities to master skills				
18. Using appropriate strategies to assess the performance of students' academic, cognitive, and metacognitive skills				
19. Adapting instruction to meet individual needs and engage learners				
20. Maximizing the use of time for instructions				
21. Creating a classroom environments conducive to learning				
22. Optimizing technology and multimedia as learning tools				
How does the school guide and ensure that instruction supports student learning?				

Core Task #3: Foster a Culture of Improvement				
In our school, we develop a <u>professional learning community</u> by:	1	2	3	4
23. Sharing a common vision and goals that have student learning as the focus				
24. Improving individual and collective performance by coming together regularly for learning, decision-making, problem-solving, and celebration				
25. Continuously enhancing individual effectiveness through inquiry, practice, and peer reflection				
26. Supporting a culture of collegiality, collaboration, respect, and trust				
How does the school foster a community of learners dedicated to improvement?				

In our school, we <u>lead for improvement</u> by:	1	2	3	4
27. Sharing leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning throughout the school				
28. Articulating a compelling need for improvement and providing meaningful ways for our professional learning community to focus on its performance				
29. Engaging in practices that support the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning				
How does the school build the capacity of leaders to provide leadership for improvement?				

**Appendix B:
Languages Offered
by the IB.**

Albanian

Amharic

Arabic

Armenian

Belarusian

Bengali

Bosnian

Bulgarian

Burmese

Cantonese (Group Two)³⁵⁰

Catalan

Chichewa

Chinese

Classical Greek (Group Two)

Croatian

Czech

Danish

Dhivehi

Dutch

Dzongkha

English

Estonian

Finnish

French

Georgian

German

Greenland

Hebrew

Hindi

Hungarian

Icelandic

Indonesian

Italian

Japanese

Kazakh

Khmer

Kinyarwanda

Korean

Kurdish

Latin (Group Two)

Latvian

Lithuanian

Macedonian

Malay

Mandarin (Group Two)

Modern Greek

Mongolian

Nepali

Norwegian

Persian

Pilipino (Filipino)

Polish

Portuguese

Romanian

Russian

Serbian

Sesotho

Shona

Sinhalese

Slovak

Slovene

Somali

Spanish

Swahili

Swedish

Tamil

Thai

Tibetan

Turkish

Ukrainian

Urdu

Uzbek

Vietnamese

Welsh

³⁵⁰ Some languages are only offered as Group Two languages

Appendix C: 2009 Budgetary Breakdown of the Santa Marta Bilingual School.

Reserve funds (buffer for incidentals, lawsuits, etc.)	\$23,263.000
Academic Investments (classroom supplies)	\$52,189.000
Infrastructure maintenance	\$88,367.000
Bank fees (financing and credit fees)	\$143,741.500
Administrative Fees (mostly utilities)	\$177,088.000
Academic expenditures (after school programs, events)	\$109,914.000
<u>Salaries</u>	<u>\$1,562,244.500</u>
Total annual income:	\$2,156,500.000

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

CURRICULAR CHOICES FOR ELITE BILINGUAL SCHOOLS ON COLOMBIA'S CARIBBEAN
COAST: AMERICAN ACCREDITATION OR THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

by
Joel Josiah Nalley

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

University of Kansas, 2010

Professor Brent Metz, Chair

Discusses the movement towards international recognition among "elite" bilingual schools on Colombia's Caribbean coast, with a special focus on U.S. accrediting agencies and the International Baccalaureate.